

Uniform with this Volume
JOURNAL
OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD
LETTERS
OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Other Books by Katherine Mansfield :

BLISS
and other Stories
THE GARDEN PARTY
and other Stories
THE DOVES' NEST
and other Stories
SOMETHING CHILDISH
and other Stories
IN A GERMAN PENSION
NOVELS AND NOVELISTS
POEMS



K.M.

TAKEN AT ROTTINGDEAN JUNE, 1910

"THIS IS THE FIRST PICTURE SHOWING SOME CHARACTER."

K.M.

THE LIFE OF
KATHERINE MANSFIELD

By
RUTH ELVISH MANTZ
AND
J. MIDDLETON MURRY

Illustrated

LONDON
CONSTABLE & COMPANY LTD
1933

PUBLISHED BY
Constable and Company Ltd.
LONDON

Oxford University Press
BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS

The Macmillan Company
of Canada, Limited
TORONTO

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION. BY J. M. M. . . .	I
I.	THE PA MEN	16
II.	WELLINGTON : II TINAKORI ROAD	62
III.	ANIKIWA	83
IV.	KARORI	95
V.	75 TINAKORI ROAD	125
VI.	THE TERRACE SCHOOL	147
VII.	FIRST LOVE	158
VIII.	LONDON	171
IX.	QUEEN'S COLLEGE	188
X.	WHITE GARDENIA	205
XI.	WELLINGTON : 47 FITZHERBERT TERRACE	225
XII.	THE GROWING OF WINGS	243
XIII.	FIRST SHORT STORIES	257
XIV.	" LA SEULE CHOSE "	281
XV.	SEA-CHANGE. BY J. M. M.	314

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

K. M. TAKEN AT ROTTINGDEAN, JUNE, 1910	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	TO FACE PAGE
BIRTHPLACE OF K. M.	58
GRANDMOTHER DYER, BABY GWEN AND THE DOLL'S HOUSE	66
ANIKIWA	83
CHESNEY WOLD, KARORI	96
THE KARORI STORE (1893)	99
VERA, MARIE (AS TOM THUMB), KATHLEEN (AS MRS. TOM THUMB), JEANNE	111
KARORI HILLS—HOME OF THE MACKELVIES	114
AT THE KARORI SCHOOL, 1898	116
75 TINAKORI ROAD, WELLINGTON	125
DAY'S BAY	143
THE BEAUCHAMP FAMILY, 1903	169
47 FITZHERBERT TERRACE, WELLINGTON	225
K. M. AND J. M. M.	345

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

INTRODUCTION

ALL the necessary research on which this book is based, and at least nine-tenths of the actual narrative, have been the work of Miss Ruth Mantz ; and it has been one of my chief concerns, in revising the text to the best of my ability, not to alter the total picture of Katherine Mansfield's early life which Miss Mantz has created.

Therefore, I do not really deserve the position of collaborator which is accorded me on the title-page ; but since my contribution has been rather more than a mere revision, and in consequence the absence of my name might lead, in the case of some few passages, to the attribution to Miss Mantz of opinions which are mine, it has been thought best that we should share the responsibility for the work.

* * * * *

Since Katherine Mansfield's death, the interest in her personality has steadily increased. The renown of her work, or the fame of her personality, is becoming universal. It quickly spread through America, it has established itself in France ; and now at last it has flowed back to her own country,

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

decisive event in Katherine Mansfield's life ; but as an occasion, not as a cause. It brought her to a moment of profound self-knowledge.

From this moment onward her life was a constant effort towards inward clarity, towards what William Blake called Self-annihilation. And the purification of her memory of New Zealand, the purging of all resentment from her soul until that island could emerge, as from the waters of its own Pacific, with the bloom and brightness of a new creation, was the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace. To be worthy of New Zealand was to be worthy in an absolute sense ; it was to have achieved a certain condition of being—to have recaptured the vision of innocence.

“ In the early morning there I always remember feeling that this little island has dipped back into the dark blue sea during the night only to rise again at the gleam of day, all hung with bright spangles and glittering drops. . . . I tried to catch that moment—with something of its sparkle and flavour. And just as on those mornings white milky mists rise and uncover some beauty, then smother it again and then again disclose it, I tried to lift that mist from my people and let them be seen and then to hide them again. . . . It's so difficult to describe all this, and it sounds perhaps over-ambitious and vain. But I don't feel anything but intensely a longing to serve my subject as well as I can.”

It *was* difficult to describe. For in fact it was nothing but the mystical vision in the specific form in which it comes to the artist of genius : “ as when the eye, having looked upon the sun, thenceforward sees the sun in everything.” Katherine was seeking to make

INTRODUCTION

firm her hold upon a kind of vision—the true vision of the Imagination—of which she was now visited with glimpses. To this kind of vision one achievement was absolutely necessary. There must be a complete abeyance of the Self.

She feels her way towards the expression of the nature of this inward necessity. Here, in October, 1917, it is to be completely occupied, to the exclusion of all other feelings, by “an intense longing to serve my subject as well as I can.” It is the authentic self-effacement of the true artist—the compulsion whereby the artist becomes the priest of what Blake called “The Everlasting Gospel.”

Four months later, in February, 1918, she has advanced quite definitely to a deeper understanding of her purpose and her own nature. She wrote :

“I’ve two ‘kick offs’ in the writing game. One is joy—real joy—the thing that made me write when we lived at Pauline, and that sort of writing I could only do in just that state of being, in some perfectly blissful way at peace. Then something delicate and lovely seems to open before my eyes, like a flower without thought of a frost or a cold breath, knowing that all about it is warm and tender and ‘ready.’ And what I try, ever so humbly, to express.

“The other ‘kick-off’ is my old original one, and, had I not known love, it would have been my all. Not hate or destruction (both are beneath contempt as real motives) but an extremely deep sense of hopelessness, of everything doomed to disaster. . . . There ! I got it exactly—a cry against corruption—that is absolutely the nail on the head. Not a protest—a cry . . . ”

Now let us remember that the months at the Villa Pauline were the days when she was writing

Prelude: that they were also the months when the superficial reader of her *Journal* would imagine that she was sorrowing over the death of her brother. In fact, they were months of real joy—of the self-abandonment of love, in living and in writing. And if we wish to understand, still more intimately, the connection between the blissful humility of that peace and the cry against corruption, we shall find it in Blake's "Book of Thel," which ends precisely with what Katherine meant by the cry—"not a protest"—against corruption.

The struggle which was in Blake's soul was also in hers. In the last resort Katherine can be understood, or the understanding of her expressed, only in such terms as Blake used to express his experience. His effort towards self-annihilation—the condition of true Imagination—was renewed in her. In 1921 it had become the burden of all her thinking on her purpose and herself. "Marks of earthly degradation still pursue me," she wrote on July 16th. "I am not crystal clear." Then, suddenly, in *At the Bay*, she achieves the condition.

"There's my Grandmother, back in her chair with her pink knitting, there stalks my Uncle over the grass; I feel as I write, 'You are not dead, my darlings. All is remembered. I bow down to you. I efface myself so that you may live again through me in your richness and beauty.' And one feels *possessed*."

There is the doctrine, there is the experience, there is Art. That, in the last resort, is what Art is, in so far as Art is a thing of consequence for the lives of men. It is the utterance of Life through a com-

INTRODUCTION

pletely submissive being. That and nothing else is the secret of great art—from the cave man drawing to the little tragedy of "The Doll's House."

Let us have no compromise and no evasion on this vital issue. In scope Katherine Mansfield was a tiny artist ; but because she was a pure artist, she was a great one. In this order of artistic achievement, the small is veritably great, and the great no greater. In this order achievement is absolute or not at all. There is Art, and there is not-Art ; and between them is precisely the absolute difference, which the philosophers of the Christian religion sought so often to express, between the descent of the divine grace and the utmost effort of the conscious personal being to achieve it. As Blake said—the great artist who was isolated because he knew the ultimate identity of Christianity and Art—"We, in our selves, are nothing."

Katherine Mansfield died young ; Blake was an old man when he died. Katherine Mansfield did not achieve all the conscious wisdom of Blake. But she was going the same path ; as Keats, when he died, was going the same path. Apparently, this path is inevitable to natures of a certain composition which constrains them to prove life "upon their pulses."

What may be the secret of this delicate and invincible integrity, no man dare say. It is perhaps enough that it should exist, and that we should recognise it. But those who do recognise it see that it is manifest from the beginning in a strange compulsion to submit to experience. Between Life and such natures the impact is not mitigated. It is

naked, all the while. Neither creed nor conception can interpose its comfortable medium. They are doomed, or privileged, to lead "a life of Sensations rather than Thoughts." Such a life seemed, no doubt, good to Keats when he wrote those words, which after-generations have found so hard to understand ; but he was to learn that, as the joys of the immediate nature are incomparable, so are its sufferings : and that the time inevitably comes when the joy is suffering and the suffering joy. For such natures, as though compelled by an inward law, return to the organic simplicity of the pre-conscious being ; but they return to that simplicity enriched with all the subtleties of consciousness. If they are artists, they have the power to bend all the complexities of language to the primal innocence of a cry—whether of delight or pain. The cry is innocent ; the protest is not.

Hence the fundamental and miraculous simplicity of all true art : a simplicity which evades the intellect for ever, because it is a simplicity which is expressed through complexity. The intellect grasps the complexity, and nothing more. The life, the meaning, the value, the significance eludes it, as the life of the flower eludes the microscopist. There are wonders to be seen through the microscope—those stupendous marvels of the infinitely small which, no less than the infinite greatness of the interstellar spaces, dismayed Pascal—but the simple miracle of life is not among them. That is closed from us, as Blake said, by our five senses, and by the intellect that is merely "a Ratio of the five senses." We know it immediately, or not at all.

INTRODUCTION

And so with Art, which is Life made audible or visible, through its subtlest vehicle—the human being in whom Life has overcome the alien and hostile enemy of Life: the Self. For, as we have said, the simplicity in complexity of true Art proceeds from the simplicity in complexity of the artist. From beginning to end the life of the true artist has this organic simplicity—it is always a life of sensation rather than thought, seeking for a kind of satisfaction which neither creed nor conception can give—the wholeness of a total self-surrender to the Life without, which marvellously is also a total self-surrender to the Life within.

Of this simplicity in complexity—in art and in life—Katherine Mansfield was an example. She had what Walter Bagehot called “the experiencing nature”—which is but another name to distinguish those rare beings who are governed by an inward compulsion to expose themselves to Life. They are secretly sustained by some secret faith in Life of which smaller souls are incapable. They know what Blake meant when he proclaimed that “the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.” They can take nothing, in this matter of life-experience, at second-hand. Always, for them, truth must be proved “in their pulses.” And so, inevitably, in the eyes of the world, they are not wise: for wisdom, in the world’s eyes, consists exactly in refusing to expose ourselves to experience. The wise accept the report of others: of that great other who is the worldly prudence of the race. They know that the master of Life is a hard man, reaping where he did not sow, and

they hide their talent in the earth. They take no risks with him.

And, in this, they *are* wise. But there is a greater wisdom than theirs. It was the wisdom of Jesus, which despised their prudence. It is the wisdom which whispers : " Take the risk ! If that is truly the urge of your secret soul, obey it. No matter what the cost, obey ! " This is the voice of the Life within urging Man to yet more Life. This is the voice to which Jesus of Nazareth was himself obedient unto death : in the strength of which he laughed at the wise and the prudent, and knew, on his pulses, that the Father of Life loved the Prodigal Son.

The wise and the prudent have emasculated these great and wonderful parables, because they dare not believe that what they say is true. It would never do to believe what they say. And not only would it never do to believe what they say ; it is impossible to believe what they say. Men obey the precepts of Jesus not because they can, or because they choose, or because they believe, but because they must. They do not take the risk : the risk is taken. They go the grievous path because *they* can go no other. They do not know that salvation awaits them. No man was ever sustained in advance by the knowledge that by losing his life he would save it. The man who knows that beforehand is incapable of losing his life : he has clung to it, he has never known what it is to be alone. Take away from Jesus his final and utter despair, and you take away all his meaning, all his triumph.

It may be said that these are tremendous com-

INTRODUCTION

parisons. What has Jesus to do with Blake, with Keats, with Katherine Mansfield? He has everything to do with them. They belong to his pattern. They are the life-adventurers, who turn from the wisdom of prudence and seek the wisdom of experience. They are the children of whom Life is justified. We may say, if we will, that it is God who drives them on. It is true; but let us beware to whom we say it, as Katherine Mansfield was ware. She wrote to her husband in 1920:

“And then suffering, bodily suffering such as I’ve known for three years. It has changed forever everything—even the *appearance* of the world is not the same—there is something added. *Everything has its shadow.* Is it right to resist such suffering? Do you know I feel it has been an immense privilege. Yes, in spite of all. How blind we little creatures are! It’s only the fairy tales we *really* live by. If we set out upon a journey, the more wonderful the treasure, the greater the temptations and perils to be overcome. And if someone rebels and says, Life isn’t good enough on those terms, one can only say: ‘*It is!*’ Don’t misunderstand me. I don’t mean a ‘thorn in the flesh’—it’s a million times more mysterious. It has taken me three years to understand this—to come to see this. We resist, we are terribly frightened. The little boat enters the dark fearful gulf and our only cry is to escape—‘put me on land again.’ But it’s useless. Nobody listens. The shadowy figure rows on. One ought to sit still and uncover one’s eyes.

“I believe the greatest failing of all is *to be frightened*. Perfect Love casteth out Fear. When I look back on my life all my mistakes have been because I was afraid. . . . Was that why I had to look on death? Would nothing less cure me? You know, one can’t help wondering, sometimes. . . . No, not a personal

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

God or any such nonsense. Much more likely—the soul's desperate choice."

"The soul's desperate choice." Those final words are profound indeed. The secret of all living religion is in them. Yet, if we say that God is "the soul's desperate choice," who will understand us? Who will understand that what is said is not that the desperate soul chooses God, but the desperate soul in the act of choosing *is* God?

That is what Katherine Mansfield was saying. And if she had said that one thing alone, written only that one letter I have quoted, she would have been immortal in those minds in which immortality is real. For this, to those who understand, is Truth—Truth naked, pure, imperishable—the very voice of Life.

It includes everything. It explains, because it is, the mystery of the Incarnation. The desperate soul of Jesus, in the act of choosing—soul's life and body's death—*was* God. The little boat that enters the dark fearful gulf—*is* God. And how it recalls her friend Lawrence's last small ship of death!

"Now launch the small ship, now as the body dies
And life departs, launch out, the fragile soul
In the fragile ship of courage, the ark of faith
With its store of food and little cooking pans
And change of clothes,
Upon the flood's black waste
Upon the waters of the end
Upon the sea of death, where still we sail
Darkly, for we cannot steer, and have no port."

Katherine's little boat, Lawrence's small ship—fraught with the essential soul in its act of desperate

INTRODUCTION

choice—these, this (for it is one single thing, one single power, frail as a thread, yet of force to bind the universe and move the world)—this is God.

God is many things besides this ; but this above all others—the courageous, isolated soul—“the fragile soul in the fragile ship of courage”—launching upon the unknown :

“ Upon the sea of death, where still we sail
Darkly, for we cannot steer, and have no port.”

The death may be the death that ends life (as men believe) or the death that leads from an old life into a new. But always it is a death. If it is only the death of the soul, that ‘ dying into life ’ which is the experience of the chosen ones, it is an anticipation of the death of the body. No man who has ‘ died into life ’ was ever afraid to die out of it. Bodily death would have been a welcome release from the pangs of the dying soul.

But the miracle of rebirth comes. Out of death life. And “ everything for ever is changed.” This is the Divine Vision, in which alone things are seen for what they are, veritably are. The soul that has suffered death and rebirth enters into this vision. It is what Blake called the world of spiritual sensation—a world of sensation, because it is a world of immediate experience ; a Spiritual world, because it is closed from the five senses, and their ratio which is the Intellect. It is beyond all these ; yet it does not deny all these. As Katherine Mansfield put it : “ There is something added. *Everything has its shadow.*” Truly and perfectly ; for it is a world on which a new Sun has risen.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

The light of that sun and its shadows are reflected in Katherine Mansfield's stories. They are perfectly simple : childishly simple, the clever critics tell us—even Lawrence, her friend, found them no more than charming. And yet, after all, the condition out of which they came was unknown to Lawrence till his last days on earth, when he had ceased to struggle for the life he could not have and turned his soul for the first time serenely towards the death which he could : when he also "sat still and uncovered his eyes." Then he chanted the simple, the childishly simple, the profoundest and the loveliest of all his songs : "The Ship of Death." At that moment, I believe, Lawrence would have understood Katherine as he had never understood her before.

Compared to Lawrence's, Katherine's achievement was tiny indeed ; yet there is in it a quality which eluded Lawrence till the end. It is serene ; and we know that its serenity comes from a heart at peace, "in spite of all." Katherine could look back on her life, with all its miseries and all its brevity, and declare that, "in spite of all" it was good. "In spite of all"—the phrase, mysterious and simple, contains the secret of herself and her art. It is a phrase which, more than any other, echoes in my heart, with all the sweetness of a long familiar pain, when I think back upon what she was, and what she wrote from what she was. "In spite of all." In spite of all, the little lamp glows gently and eternally in *The Doll's House* ; in spite of all, the sleeping face in *The Garden Party* murmurs that all is well ; "in spite of all," she wrote to her

INTRODUCTION

husband in a letter found among her belongings, to be opened only after her death ; “ no truer lovers ever walked the earth than we were—in spite of all, in spite of all.”

J. MIDDLETON MURRY.

"The umbrageous hills kissed the waters of the South Pacific."—*The True Original Pa Man.*

I

KARORI was exactly the place that Katherine Mansfield would have chosen for Kezia to live in as a little girl. Wellington had its magic of sea, and the docks where ships blossomed from the dark water like lilies from a stagnant pond. But Karori had something quite other vibrating in its keen air—an electric current, stimulating, exhilarating, charged with exuberance. How completely, as she breathed it, she became a child of that country. An instinct more powerful than reason woke in her a thousand inherited impulses and desires. It was the instinct impelling the pioneers before her to "search behind the mountain ranges"; and which had rooted them, at last, in that Island. Growing in her, it was fanned by that air, fed by the sound of the sea, and by sight of those sharply-folded hills. It was to live on in her, and grow continually more living, all her life. No matter what country was stamped upon her passport, it was by virtue of Karori that she was to remain "the little Colonial."

But Katherine Mansfield's Karori was a Karori that had suffered a sea-change, and been transmuted into something rich and strange. It was to become

for her, and for certain of her readers, the symbol of a quality of experience—of that experience of the external world which came to her when she was “crystal-clear.” The seed of this pearl of price was a certain quality of physical atmosphere :

“ I love this place more and more ” (she wrote of the Isola Bella at Mentone). “ One is conscious of it as I used to be conscious of New Zealand. I mean if I went for a walk there and lay down under a pine tree and looked up at the wispy clouds through the branches I came home plus the pine tree.”

But it was far more than a physical effect. “ Un paysage, c'est un état d'âme,” said Amiel. And the crystal clarity of Katherine Mansfield's memory of Karori was not due to the light of the sun. Karori shone for her in another light.

“ Why should one love ? No reason ; it's just a mystery. But it is like a light. I can only see things truly in its rays.”

What had come to pass in those later days was her emergence out of the valley of the shadow of Experience into the light of Innocence regained, and just as William Blake turned to the child world to find terms to express his wisdom, so Katherine Mansfield turned back to Karori.

Therefore it would be to deny the very inmost law of high human experience to believe that if only her memory of Karori had remained with her undimmed from childhood, she might have been spared much suffering, or escaped that constraint of destiny which compelled her to meet unhappiness in the pursuit of strange gods whose ways were not

her ways, and to be caught in the toils of experience which "wasn't ALL experience." The experience that "isn't ALL experience" is precisely what Experience is. And it was in virtue of that suffering, that pursuit of strange gods, that "waste," that she became crystalline. She was marked out to tread "the road of excess that leads to the palace of wisdom." It was not merely after, but because, she had felt the full impact of life—not merely after, but because she had reached the conclusion: "I adore *Life*, but my experience of the world is that it's pretty terrible"—that she came fully into her possession of Karori. That possession was the reward of a spiritual victory.

Her flowering was the flowering of the aloe—"that flower safety"—which, rooted in its own soil, pushing through its nettles, measures its height in the upper air, at last—and flowering, dies. But the first stirring, the first breaking of that ground which was to nourish the plant, began generations before the conception of *Prelude* or *The Doll's House*—began even before the Pa Men had left their England to pioneer in their New Zealand.

2

The Pa Men were a vigorous race. They were descended from characteristic English merchant stock. The Beauchamps were goldsmiths and silvermiths in the City of London for two centuries. It appears to have been the seventeenth-century head of the house, the great-great-great-great-grandfather

THE PA MEN

of Kathleen Mansfield Beauchamp, who had Samuel Pepys for a customer.

“I went into Cheepside to Mr. Beauchamp’s, the goldsmith, to look out a piece of plate . . . and did choose a gilt tankard,”

Pepys recorded on November 14th of 1660. And on the 19th :

“So home, and there came Mr. Beauchamp to me with the gilt tankard, and did pay him for it £20.”

Three years later (June 1st, 1663) the goldsmith was involved in Pepys’ more serious affairs :

“So to Mr. Beauchamp, the goldsmith, he being one of the jury to-morrow in Sir W. Batten’s case against Field. I have been telling him our case, and I believe he will do us good service.”

And on November 23rd of that year :

“I went to Mr. Beauchamp’s, one of our jury, to confer with him about our business with Field at our trial to-morrow.”

From this Master Beauchamp the business descended in the direct line, to Ralph (b. about 1670) ; to Robert (b. 1717) ; to Edward (b. 1750) ; until it came, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, into the hands of John Beauchamp (b. 1781), who was—in the private language of Katherine Mansfield’s family—“The Original Pa Man.” A “Pa Man,” it seemed, was a “character,” rugged, whimsical, vital, life-generating—paternal.

John Beauchamp, “The Original Pa Man,” was

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

father of the pioneering generation. British New Zealand belonged to his era. Captain James Cook, sighting it on October 16th, 1769, was contemporary with John Beauchamp's father, Edward; and his sister, Jane Beauchamp, was one of those "ladies who appeared the most daring speculators" on July 29th, 1839, when Edward Gibbon Wakefield, in the face of Parliament's refusal of authorisation, arranged the London drawing of 100,000 acres of Wellington lots, prior to his colonisation of the Islands. It was John Beauchamp's sons: Arthur (Katherine Mansfield's grandfather), and Henry Herron (father of her cousin, "Elizabeth," the Countess Russell), and Cradock of Anikiwa, who helped to push back the frontiers—first of Australia, then of New Zealand. If Katherine Mansfield found herself for ever and for ever part of "that Island," there was reason enough.

Arthur Beauchamp, born in Hornsey Lane, Highgate, in 1827, was twelve years old when his Aunt bought her dozen sections of Wellington city land, besides two sections in Napier, and a farm in that vicinity. When these lands (which he, as "The True Original Pa Man," was one day to possess) were purchased, they had not been seen even by Colonel William Wakefield, the founder's brother, who—at that very moment—was sailing toward Wellington in the first expeditionary ship, the *Tory*, with thirty-five souls, and high hopes of bartering land from the Maoris to meet his obligations to his London purchasers.

Jane Beauchamp's purchase had an odd history.

Had not Lady Laura Tollemache, youngest

THE PA MEN

daughter of the Countess of Dysart (of Ham House, Richmond Park), entered into her unfortunate marriage, in 1808, with John Dalrymple (later, by the death of his cousin, the seventh Earl of Stair), the whole course of the Beauchamp line would, doubtless, have been different ; for, had not Lady Laura's marriage been annulled the following year (1809)—“in consequence of prior contract in 1804” incurred by John Dalrymple, who, forgetful of an episode in Scotland, was “not considering his previous marriage valid”—she would probably never have become the heirless recluse, dependent upon the friendship of her companion, Jane Beauchamp. As it was, Lady Laura at some twenty odd years, retired to Hamworth Park with her dogs and her parrot, her loyal companion, Jane Beauchamp, and the occasional company of some children, her youngest nieces and nephews. And evidently her disappointed affection was turned towards her companion and her favourite niece. When she made her last will, ten days before her death on July 11th, 1834, she left the following bequests :

“To my nephew the Honorable Algernon Tolle-mache Two thousand pounds sterling . . . to Miss Jane Beauchamp now or late of Enfield, in the County of Middlesex Twenty thousand pounds sterling and all my watches and I wish her to choose such of my Plate China Books and Furniture as she may wish to possess which I bequeathe to her accordingly I bequeathe to Trustees for my dear niece Maria Eliza Marchioness of Ailesbury Twenty thousand pounds sterling and all my Diamonds Jewels Trinkets and Ornaments of every description (except watches) and also all the remainder of my Plate Furniture Books

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

and all other Chattels (except china) not chosen by Miss Beauchamp The said legacy and bequests to be for the sole and separate use of my said niece independent of her husband and to all intents and purposes as if she were a fem sole And I bequeathe the remainder of my china not chosen by the said Miss Beauchamp to my dear mother the Countess of Dysart to whom I also bequeathe my Horses Coach Dog Cows and other live stock And I give to the said Miss Beauchamp my favorite dogs Daphne and Zoe and also my Parrot and I bequeathe her an annuity of one hundred pounds per Annum during the life of each of my said Dogs and fifty pounds a year during the life of my said Parrot . . .

“And I appoint the said Niece the Marchioness of Ailesbury and the said Jane Beauchamp EXECUTORS of this my will . . . ”

Subsequently, when the Hon. Algernon Tolle-mache (who was a younger son) grasped the opportunity for land speculation in an unexplored country, and bought so heavily in the Wakefield venture, he became “one of the largest landholders in New Zealand, both in the North Island and in the Wairau.” He was joined in his speculation by the two women. The Marchioness of Ailesbury purchased four sections ; Miss Jane Beauchamp four times as much again.

In those years, one may conjecture, the destiny of the Beauchamp colonial line depended upon the temper of a woman. The natural thing would have been for Jane Beauchamp to have come to the rescue of the silversmith's business, which was tottering. This honourable house, now established in Holborn, had changed its character with the times. It had launched out into industrial manufacture. John

THE PA MEN

Beauchamp had invented and patented an imitation silverware (named by him "British Plate"), but apparently he lacked the capital, and perhaps also the business enterprise, to push his new invention. One might have expected his sister Jane, now a wealthy woman, to back him: in which case the Beauchamp sons, like their forefathers, would have been manufacturers in London instead of adventurers in the Antipodes. But it is tempting to imagine that the companion of Lady Laura Tolle-mache felt implacable towards a brother who had descended to Brummagem. Whether for this cause or another, she and her brother were hostile—were, in fact, never reconciled, and her estate was left, some years later, to distant cousins. Except the New Zealand lands, which went to Arthur.

Or it may be that his sister was estranged not by his vulgar business concentration, but by his lack of it. For John Beauchamp, "The Original Pa Man," is said to have preferred fox-hunting to business. A new strain—not commercial—seems to have appeared in him. He was fond of poetry, especially the verse of younger contemporary poets: Coleridge and Byron. It was with him that Arthur learned the hundreds of verses from Byron which he later employed to such advantage in the Colonies. John Beauchamp, himself, occasionally tried verse writing, and by the publication of *The Rook* in the local press, came to be known as "the Poet of Hornsey Lane."

THE ROOK

"The morn dawned bright, the sun was high,
The Duke, went out his hawks to try,

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Well trained, he judged, I ween :
The rook was circling high in air,
His new-fledged pinions to prepare,
No danger there was seen.

“ The hood was cast, the bird up flew,
He missed the prey that was in view,
And pounded on the rock ;
With broken wing he fell to ground,
The village boys were playing round,
And pity on him took.

“ Pity, first germ of generous thought,
Young nature’s impulse felt untaught,
Thy kindly spark I prize ;
Prospective virtue, noble mind,
Justice, mercy, love of kind,
All that adorns the wise . . . ” (etc.)

John Beauchamp’s wife, Anne Stone (great-grandmother of Katherine Mansfield), was one of six sisters known as “ The Six Precious Stones.” Anne was a beautiful girl—one of the fadeless ones—“ looking more beautiful than ever ” as she grew older. She and a younger sister, Harriet Honour, who married C. R. Leslie, the artist, were so alike that it was difficult to tell whether the Royal Academician had painted his latest picture from his wife, “ Harry,” or his sister-in-law, Anne.

Both women wore—under their huge poke bonnets—a deceptive look of gentle obedience (being “ good wives ” in the particular fashion of the period) ; but though the eyes were dark and dreamy, wide-set under broad brows, the mouth, full-lipped and bow-shaped, was yet very firm. And there was something more—a bit of the fay—in their look ; probably from that slight, unexpected flare of

nostrils of a longish, well-cut nose ; or perhaps from the way the head was set to the shoulders. It is the face that appears in most of Leslie's better pictures, for "Harry" became his "Stunner" when she became his wife. When Anne Beauchamp sat for him (for instance as "The Widow Wadman," one of his most popular tableau portraits), she appeared so like her sister as to be but a variation of the feminine type he was making so popular among his contemporaries.

Both women were more intellectual companions to their husbands than was usual in their era. Mrs. Beauchamp shared her husband's enjoyment of poetry ; Mrs. Leslie supported hers in his hero-worship of contemporary artists of whom (with his "well-intended reticence") he preserved in his *Memoirs* "only the good." It is significant that John Constable, R.A., who knew them so well, should have written to Leslie : "You are always right and if not, you and Mrs. Leslie together are never failing." If Anne Beauchamp's relation to her husband was slightly different, in this particular respect, it must not be forgotten that she had married a "Pa Man."

The Leslies were a part of the artistic coterie living in St. John's Wood, safely removed—like the Constables in Well Walk, Hampstead, and the Beauchamps in Hornsey Lane, Highgate—from the "unhealthy humours" of "the slimy marshes of Chelsea and Paddington and St. Pancras." Though the trip between any two of these was "so much expense" (in a fly), and to have "safely made the journey" sufficient cause for a letter of congratula-

tion, the families were close-knit in the bond of children of the same age, and exchanged frequent visits.

John Constable had met the Beauchamps through Leslie, and his two boys were thrilled by the Holborn workshop.

"I went with my boys to Mr. Beauchamp's last evng." (Constable wrote to Leslie on January 20th, 1833) "their delight was great—not only at the very great kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Beauchamp and the boys, but at the sight of almost all that was to their heart's content—forges—smelting potts—metals—straps—and bellows—coals ashes dust—dirt—cinders—and everything else that is agreeable to boys.

"They want me to build them just such a place under my painting room—and had I not better do so—and give up landscape painting. Poor Mrs. Beauchamp was suffering with toothache—but her politeness made her assure me that I succeeded in 'taking it off'."

And on another day :

"John" (who was age eight) "set off alone to Holborn yesterday. Master Beauchamp has engaged him to 'mind his carronade'—which he did very nicely."

From these artistic circles—rather than from the Highgate Grammar School—Arthur Beauchamp probably derived those advantages in culture which, in colonial life later, placed him beside men of good birth and background. John Constable was not the only eminent acquaintance of Arthur's uncle, Leslie, for he frankly admitted the pleasure he found in "consorting with his superiors." Turner was an associate of his ; Edwin Landseer, the dark curly-

headed "boy dog" was in the Academy when Leslie, in his first years over from America, was studying on a Philadelphia grant. Washington Irving was an intimate family friend. Leslie, despite his weakness for men of eminence, lived in closely-knit family ties ; and Arthur's associations with the St. John's Wood family began very early.

In July, 1830, when his mother was posing for "The Widow Wadman," Arthur (the sixth of nine sons) was three years old. Since he was the youngest Beauchamp at the time, it is probable that he was taken with her to the St. John's Wood studio, opening off a garden, from which his handsome young uncle "picked a honeysuckle or a rose" daily before breakfast for the glass "on the mantel-shelf of his painting room," hung, not with his own compositions, but with his copies of the masters. The oldest cousin, Robert Leslie, was four at the time ; the boys were of an age to have begun the habit of intimacy, amusing each other while the artist ("keeping up a kind of whistling") posed his sister-in-law, Anne Beauchamp, as the too refined captivator of Uncle Toby.

3

Jane Beauchamp never went out to New Zealand, though her land titles were under dispute for years after that one burst of independent investment with the Tollemaches, when—at £100 a section—she bought some 1,100 acres in Wellington. Her investment lacked the personal attention which it needed. Land sections were chosen in order of the original

land ballot, and though three of her London drawings were among the first 500, her allotted land in Wellington adjoined the Bolton Street Cemetery ; while drawings made immediately after hers won sections off Lambton and Thorndon Quays—by position, assured of being important business districts. Her other eight sections were near Wadestown, far to the rear of the proposed city.

Colonel Wakefield had selected the Wellington site, bartering with the Maoris for the 400 miles encircling the Harbour, “ 100 red blankets, 100 muskets, 2 tierces of tobacco, 48 iron pots, . . . 60 red nightcaps, 10 dozen looking glasses, 1 gross of jew’s harps,” etc.

The colonisation of New Zealand by the New Zealand Land Company was a remarkable undertaking. In spite of its many practical mistakes the enterprise conceived by Edward Gibbon Wakefield and carried into operation largely by his two brothers, Colonel Wakefield and Captain Wakefield, R.N., marked a new epoch in colonial adventure. The newness consisted in the fact that it was no longer adventure ; it was a carefully planned attempt to establish the best type of British stock and the best type of British polity in a country where they could flourish. The necessary capital for the development of public services and the remuneration of competent officials was raised by the selling of land in London ; a just proportion between responsible capital and self-respecting labour was deliberately sought. The project was largely and nobly conceived ; and it was infinitely in advance of any conception of colonisation in the minds of the

Tapers and Tadpoles of Whitehall. It was a high-minded and in the final event entirely successful attempt to force the British Government by example into some consciousness of its imperial responsibilities.

On September 20th, 1839, Colonel Wakefield arrived at Port Nicholson, now Wellington, with directions "to purchase native land, to acquire information, and to prepare places for immediate settlement." In less than three months he was able "to report that he had purchased a territory as large as Ireland, for which he paid to the natives goods valued at, in round numbers, £9,000, and within which he had reserved a tenth part of the whole as land exclusively for the natives." Meanwhile the Company in London had sold land to the value of more than £100,000, and had despatched 216 first- and second-class passengers and 909 labourers as emigrants to New Zealand, despite the warning of the Colonial Office that the action was illegal. The struggle between the responsible Company and the irresponsible Crown was to vex the early life of the colony.

The immigration ships which immediately followed established the class and character which was to remain New Zealand's for all time. In addition to administrators—men of good birth and breeding, traditional land-owners—there were mechanics and agricultural labourers, heads of families not over thirty years of age, who were given free passage. This was a select group of serious, law-abiding people, their general character indicated by the compact they made among themselves when they found that—having embarked without Crown sanc-

tion—they were without civil authority. Having agreed to live to all intents and purposes as British subjects, and to punish “as if the offence had been committed against the law and within the realm of England,” the colony of 1,500 English and 400 natives lived together for four months “without a serious breach” (so they said). The contrast with conditions in New South Wales and Victoria was absolute.

Yet when Sovereignty was ceded to the Queen, the irregularity of Colonel Wakefield’s proceedings, and the speculations of Sydney land-sharks, had led to Lieutenant-Governor Hobson’s announcement that “the Government would not recognise the validity of land-titles not given under the Queen’s authority.” Thus land-claims, without titles (though the purchases had been made in London for not less than £1 an acre—a basic principle of the Wakefield scheme), “became the subjects of litigations and petitions, some of which were not settled for twenty years.” All of which determined, further, the course of the Beauchamp colonial line.

In those twenty years, the colonists at Wellington passed from one misfortune to the next. The first settlement had been at Pito-one (in Maori, “End-of-the-Sand”), on a beach across the Harbour from the site of Wellington. But in the teeth of wind and weather, the settlers discovered their mistake; and despite trouble with natives who still claimed the land, in September, 1840, they floated the bank on a raft across the Harbour to Te Aro (where Wakefield Street is to-day). In November, 1842, a fire fanned by wind swept across the new village of

raupo thatch along Te Aro Flat. Unaware of earthquake danger, the settlers and natives rebuilt in substantial fireproof clay and brick.

Wars with the Maoris divided their energies the next year. The Chief, Te Rauparaha, had carried terror and desolation into the district afterward named Marlborough, at the top of the South Island. The site of Picton and its stream (later to be owned in part by Arthur Beauchamp), called Waitohe after the Chief's favourite daughter, was precious to him ; he insisted that the Wairau had not been specifically named in the Land Company sale, and that the beautiful country along the Sounds was still native possession. In 1843, the white men, led by Captain Arthur Wakefield, Colonel Wakefield's brother, rashly ventured in to survey, and were slaughtered in the "Wairau massacre." For years afterwards the situation of the English settlers was precarious : native discontent flared intermittently, fanned by martinet governors.

Yet the colony at Wellington was planted more firmly by every ship docked. Gradually it crept up the hills surrounding the Harbour :

"The country for some miles about Port Nicholson" (wrote the artist, Mr. Angas, in 1845) "is little else than a succession of steep, irregular hills, clothed with dense forests ; the nearest available land of any extent is the valley of the Hutt. . . . By an enormous and almost incredible expenditure of labour and money, they have cut down the lofty trees and cleared patches here and there amongst the forest, on the mountain sides to sow their wheat ; but owing to the steepness of the hills the heavy rains washed down much of the seed sown, and the unfortunate settlers

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

have not been able to raise sufficient for their own consumption. The view from the hills at the back of the town is a scene of exceeding beauty. The harbour looks like a large blue lake embosomed deep in the hills. The green and umbrageous forest displays foliage equal in magnificence to that of the tropics."

In October, 1848, the most appalling earthquake shocks ever experienced in the lives of the settlers, or remembered by the natives, levelled the city of Wellington. The fireproof clay and brick buildings dissolved in the earthquake, as the thatched huts had melted in the fire. Terrified, many families tried to flee to Sydney on the *Sobraon*; but the vessel in beating out of the Heads missed stays, ran ashore, and went to pieces on the rocks. Taking this as an omen, the passengers returned to Wellington, to rebuild the city.

4

In that year, 1848, Arthur Beauchamp came of age. He had developed into a young man impatient of existing conditions and restless under conventional ties. He was small and aggressive; and to these qualities were added self-confidence, a quick temper, wit (inclining, in the habit of the day, unduly towards the pun) and an immense loquacity. Something in him attracted the particular attention of his aunt, for he alone of the family seems to have been in communication with her. She imparted to him her faith in the future of New Zealand, and eventually made over to him her land-claims there.

It was an opening, and he needed one. The

"British Plate" manufactory in Holborn was now closed down. His four eldest brothers had died, leaving him the second surviving son. Henry Herron, now the eldest, had been taken into the business of Mr. De Charmes (his uncle by marriage with one of the Stones) who was a merchant in London. He had now been sent by his firm to the Mauritius, whence he had moved on to Sydney, and started business there. What Henry was doing in Australia, Arthur would do in New Zealand.

So in 1848 Arthur Beauchamp sailed for Sydney in the barque *Lochnagar*. Pioneering in the Antipodes needed courage at that moment, when out of the dangerous unexplored were coming tales of Englishmen eaten by cannibals in New Zealand, and murdered by convicts in Australia. The voyage itself called for some endurance. It was a voyage of three or four months, during which fresh food could be had only as long as live stock survived; when passengers' quarters were barely as good as quarters for stock; and when a part of every ship's cargo was a bale of canvas bags for the bodies, to be let over the ship's side *en route*. Boats were few to Australia—fewer to New Zealand, then. Mary Taylor, in Wellington, having read *Jane Eyre*, watched for a month for a mail ship to take her letter back to Charlotte Brontë:

"After I had read it" (she wrote in July, 1849)
 "I went on to the top of Mt. Victoria and looked for a ship to carry a letter to you. There was a little thing with one mast, and also H.M.S. 'Fly' and nothing else. If a cattle vessel came from Sydney she would take a mail, but we had east wind for a month and nothing can come in."

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Arthur reached Wellington from Sydney, the next year. Incoming vessels lay a mile or more out from shore, served by a fleet of small boats, each with a single sail; often these capsized in the south-westerly gales. It was dangerous to enter the Heads at all, with no lighthouse there.

The city had risen again, brick on brick: new Government offices, banks and stone buildings, tenements and homes. Two good-sized Maori *pahs* were near by—one at Te Aro, one where Tinakori Road ran later. Shops lined one side of Lambton Quay which twisted with the shore; the sea lapped on the other, at times rolling across the road and even into the “stores.”

About this time, too the Hon. Algernon Tollemache reached New Zealand. In purchasing thirty-four of the original land sections, he had acted as agent for the Countess of Dysart, as well as on his own behalf. He had drawn throughout the London balloting and his numbers, from 58 to 1035, including some of the best city land—had been acquired both by original lottery and later exchange. He was summoned by letters describing local conditions.

“There is much distress in the Colony on account of the non-settlement of land claims” (ran one a few years before). . . . “Here we have so many barbers, taylors, ribbon weavers, button makers . . . please to tell Mr. Tollemache they are not farmers and we want farmers in a new colony. We have far too many lawyers . . .”

The New Zealand Land Company, in the effort to recompense some unpaid claims, had bought

from the Maoris Waitohi (including the site of Picton) ; and that "blood-drenched plain," the Wairau, had opened for white settlement in 1849 ; but now, in 1850, the Company had finally surrendered its charter to the Crown, and Arthur Beauchamp, arrived to take possession of the lands left him by his aunt, found that complications between the Government and the Company made it impossible to make good his claims. Chance had intervened once more. At that moment came word of goldfields just discovered in Australia ; he dropped his original intention of settling immediately in Wellington, and sailed again for Sydney.

While he was on the gold-fields, another terrible earthquake shook stone from stone the remaining brick and plaster houses of Wellington ; and in the path of earthquake came tidal waves. Once more the city was rebuilt, this time with square, wooden, box-like buildings, earthquake-proof, with red slate roofs—proof against fire—the style that was to remain. It was built for a commercial city, yet no commerce could completely spoil those sharply-folded hills. The low buildings simply clung to them like grey and red barnacles about the rim of a bay. Rising on the steep terraces like an Italian city, Wellington overflowed a succession of hills into a succession of hollows and valleys : Karori, Wadestown, the Hutt. The natural amphitheatre surrounding the Harbour was scalloped by bays : Day's, Evans, Oriental Bay. The Harbour, once a crater, so many fathoms deep, showed the bottomless green of New Zealand jade on calm days ; but it was seldom calm. Winds whip continually

between those two Islands, as down a funnel, to Wellington at the base. "The broom behind the windy town" took the place of native bush—broom and gorse and eucalyptus—instead of rata, beech, and tree fern.

5

It was a passage of only eight days from Wellington—but eight of the roughest days that any sea provides—to Port Fairy, beyond Melbourne on the south coast of Victoria, where (on June 10th, 1854) Arthur Beauchamp married Mary Elizabeth Stanley. Her ancestors had belonged to the same trade as the Beauchamp family; her father was a silversmith in Lancashire. Though she was so young (only eighteen), she, too, was the stock of which pioneers are made, and she was ready to meet Australia with her young husband—was braced to the new adventure, uninhibited, set to it as one leans against the wind to hold a balance. Her body was flexible and sound, strengthened by the tense spirit, hemmed in to itself safely by a ring of belief she had cast about her—a religious belief she was never to lose. As another would say "grace before meat," Elizabeth Stanley veered an instant before Australia, and only her family knew why she bent her head.

Her bridal journey was through one of the most lawless parts of the civilised world of the time. Australia and Tasmania were England's penal stations then, had been for sixty-seven years past, and were to be for thirteen years more, until some

THE PA MEN

160,000 criminals—half victims of atrocious law, half true criminal types—had been poured over Victoria, Tasmania, and New South Wales. To these were added the adventurers—transients drawn together by the goldfields. Seasoned pioneers like the historic Captain Barry, who had been through California's and Sydney's first gold-rushes, found Victoria in those days "the roughest and wildest place in the world to do business in." The shifting of whole towns over-night to new goldfields was effective enough evasion of civil authority.

Even in Melbourne, capital and port of Victoria, the Government was lax and feeble :

" Crimes of the most fearful character and degree abound on all sides " ; (a resident of Melbourne had written, only the year before) " the roads swarm with bushrangers ; the streets with burglars and desperadoes of every kind. In broad daylight, and in the most public streets, men have been knocked down, ill-used, and robbed ; and shops have been invaded by armed ruffians who have ' stuck up ' the inmates, and rifled the premises even situated in crowded thoroughfares. . . . Murders of the most frightful character have become so numerous that they are given only passing notice, and such is the inefficiency of the police that scarcely since the foundation of the colony has one perpetrator of premeditated murders been brought to justice. Police are cowed, or leagued with the actors in outrages. . . . We have all the evils of the Lynch law without its vigour or promptitude . . . "

To this city, Arthur Beauchamp, then twenty-six, was bringing his eighteen-year-old bride. It was mid-winter, and roads for those 100 miles were

little more than ruts through the bush. Why he should have chosen to prospect in Castlemain (below Mt. Alexander), when the gold population was already draining down to Ballarat, no one can say. It was only one of his mistaken moves in a country not propitious to him. Later, in New Zealand, he was considered "sound" in judgment, and, in financial matters, keen and resourceful, though hot-headed. But in Australia, when flair for speculation counted for much, he seemed always to be attracted by the wrong pole. He was simply "unlucky," as prospectors said.

The journey to Castlemain, some eighty miles by detour, took ten days. Roads were in a dreadful state, washed out, cut by horses and heavy carts dragging supplies. Hundreds were passing, going to the diggings or returning, many of the carts carrying women and infants. The down travellers shouted news of wealth and of murders. There were three murders that week in Bendigo, just beyond the Mount ; one had been in a tent, surrounded by people who had heard a cry "Murder !" followed by a laugh (probably the murderer's), but hearing laughter, they had thought it a joke. In the Black Forest—half-way from Melbourne to Castlemain—bushrangers were abroad—had stopped thirty drays, stripping them of goods and gold.

But the Beauchamps went on. The Forest itself as they passed through—wattle, groves of she-oaks and eucalyptus, was beautiful—unawakened, unfulfilled, without real identity—like all that Australian country, tricking decent Englishmen into a Mephistophelian bargain. A jackass laughed. Parrots

screamed. "Why," asked someone, "do all birds *scream* in Australia, and none ever sing?"

As they came within sight of the Mount, heaped masses of granite and quartz took strange forms, balanced in odd positions—great weights, quite round, that could be pushed with little effort off balance, to lurch and rattle down the mountain side.

Their first home, Castlemain, the mushroom town, was seething with indignation. The Governor of Victoria had imposed on prospectors a licence fee of 30s. a month, with a penalty of £5 for the first negligence, and six months' imprisonment for any thereafter. It made no difference that the prospector might have paid the fee, and that registration at headquarters proved it; if he did not have the card upon his person, sentence was imposed. This growing grievance had been intensified, in the year the Beauchamps were married, by the fright of Sir Charles Hotham, who—reaching Victoria and finding a depleted treasury and growing expense of the fields—had ordered the police to redouble their efforts to collect the fees. The police stationed at the goldfields were largely recruited from Tasmania; many were ex-convicts, risen through eminence in brutality to be gaol warders. The situation of the unsuccessful prospector was terrible.

The gold lay so irregularly that success was the sheerest luck. And the unlucky prospector (who had to buy food at extortionate prices) was simply unable to continue to pay for a licence. Before the year was over, Castlemain miners had defied all authority, and their riots in the face of martial law

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

were only a forerunner of the famous "Eureka Stockade." In Castlemain, in May of that year, 1855, was born the Beauchamps' first son, Walter.

By the next year, when the second son, Cradock, was born and named after Arthur's sea-faring younger brother who had lately joined them, Arthur Beauchamp had given up prospecting, for the time, and established a shop and auctioneering business in Melbourne. His young family lived at St. Kilda.

There were two St. Kildas, really. One was a fashionable suburb and resort across the Bay from Williamstown, accessible by a fleet of steam tugs on week days, and on Sundays, by a three-mile walk or ride by road from Melbourne. This St. Kilda, on the south side of the Yarra River, near Liardet's Bay, was Melbourne's Sunday resort. It was a mushroom town of wooden houses, "rented before the shingles were on the roof" (two rooms for £2 10s. a week), with squares of gay gardens, neatly tended. It was the fashion mart, seething with "shopkeepers, shopmen, diggers, ladies, diggers' wives, horses, hackney carriages, shands, gigs;" and flaunting "such blaze of silk and satin, such bonnets, such feathers, flowers (artificial), such ribbons"—making fine the ladies and the wives of diggers come to fortune over night, that it seemed not all the shops in Melbourne could supply them.

But there was another St. Kilda—"Canvass Town," near Emerald Hill, between Melbourne and the fashionable resort. Here the unlucky diggers lived as best they could with their families. It was intended as a temporary encampment.

Government tents at 5s. a week afforded a covering for luggage and children. Round the 8,000 miserable inhabitants of "Canvass Town" was concentrated "all the dirt, misery, and squalor of the oldest and most poorly inhabited slums of great cities." Every tent was trying to sell something; it was a sort of Caledonian Market offering the relics of prosperity—from a pianoforte, to a Greek book, or rusty frying pan. "Well-dressed and genteelly reared females, and young and tender infants, as well as grown up persons crouched in these miserable wigwams."

Yet on any to-morrow, positions between those living in St. Kilda the smart, and St. Kilda "Canvass Town," might be reversed. Here Cradock was born in June, 1856, and died in November of the following year.

By the time of the birth (November 15th, 1858) of Harold Beauchamp (who was to become the "Pa Man," father of Katherine Mansfield), Arthur was prospecting, again—this time at Ararat, in the Victoria Pyrenees. Ararat was one of the forested spurs descending from the broken range at the foot of higher ridges. The ground was scarred as though the city of tents and rough huts had been under fire, leaving holes in the earth like gaping graves.

Luck went tremendously for or against the prospectors here. Some, like Arthur Beauchamp, with luck dead against them, changed and changed again, slaving away the whole of daylight—uselessly—when those at a short distance were discovering rich treasure. The formation was like that in the other mining districts of Victoria:

beneath the surface soil lay a thick bed of gravel ; then a bed of reddish earth containing gold ; but not much time was spent on this, as immediately below lay a bed of blue clay likely to contain ore ; below the clay was a stratum of slate with rich pockets (fissures in the slate in which gold had been deposited—sometimes in solid nuggets). But on certain claims masses of granite hidden in the clay beds blocked progress for days. To be comparatively, or intermittently, lucky was not enough. It was considered nothing to find an average of two ounces of gold a day. Diggers were seldom content with less than £60 to £70 a week ; some made as much as £500 to £1,000.

But the luck of gold which passed over the father descended upon the son. It was to avoid his brothers, but settle on him. Born in a city of a day, he was to have many homes, enlarging and increasing as time passed. He was to have granted, finally, his deepest wish—*prestige*, but it was to come to him vicariously, and in the manner he expected least.

By this time, 1858, two more Beauchamp brothers had reached Australia—Frederick, who died almost immediately after arriving in Sydney, and Horatio, who started a business which flourished and descended to his grandsons. Henry Herron remained at Sydney until 1870 ("Elizabeth" was born in Kribilli) ; then he returned to England. But Arthur, who had no divining rod in this country, returned again to St. Kilda, and in Melbourne he began what was to be his life-occupation : combined auctioneering and a general store.

With his dramatic ability, and his tenacious

memory, he was a born auctioneer. It was his custom to attract attention by preliminary recitations, and when he had assembled a crowd, to approach the subject of his wares by the road of witticism and pun, until he had warmed his audience before the sale, as some of his trade-rivals warmed it after by "shouting" drinks. Contemporaries remember his reciting Byron for a solid hour and a half. There was no end to the verses he had by heart, or to his ingenuity in adapting them to his use, or to his endurance in declaiming them.

He was well liked, being a magnetic, genial little man with keen blue eyes, and a gruff rounded voice that carried. When his goods were not in demand for themselves, he startled his audience into buying. Auctioneering—and shop-keeping, too—were nearly as precarious as prospecting, for on the goldfields the ordinary laws of supply and demand simply did not exist, "the value of the thing being what it will fetch." To speculate successfully in stores required unusual foresight and quickness, for the market was in a bewildering state of fluctuation. This game was better adapted to the talents of Arthur Beauchamp than prospector's "luck."

Dealing generally with men who had easy gold in their hands, the store-man could do a tremendous business, if he had the wit to popularise some special article and get a "corner on it." For a time, the height of fashion for Melbourne brides was a lorgnette; and "spy-glasses," as they were called, sold for an exorbitant price until the demand exhausted the supply. Again, a rat plague raised the price of cats to 30s.; and boots sold for several

guineas a pair, until a storekeeper imported a whole ship-load from England when the price dropped suddenly to 7s.

Stores were usually paid for over the counter with gold, a nugget greater in value than the goods, being "changed" into fine gold. The salesman, if he was canny, allowed his customers 55s. an ounce, and exchanged the gold at the Melbourne bank for 65s.

Yet there were times when the auctioneering business was so crowded that turnover came only by "cutting trade" (selling at cost, or below); moreover, there was always danger from bushrangers; and purchased goods were not always paid for. Rarer and rarer became the trustful store-keeper who would "keep a bunch of mates going" till they "struck it." If a man was lucky, he usually paid, but if ill-luck dogged him, it cast its shadow on the store-keeper. It took a fearless and resourceful man to collect his debts.

The Beauchamps' fourth son, Arthur de Charmes, was born in St. Kilda in September, 1860. In the harbour was a fleet of anchored ships, whose crews had all deserted for the "diggings"; yet housing was insufficient for those left, and the city and suburbs were fearfully overcrowded; and "no man having even the appearance of respectability," a contemporary wrote "can go abroad in the unlighted, unswept and filthy streets without the danger of being 'bailed up' by marauders."

In 1861, announcing that "the climate of Melbourne was fatal to his very young children," Arthur Beauchamp with his family, his brother Cradock, his fellow-pro prospector and friend, Mr.

Hornby, and all their goods and chattels, embarked for Picton, New Zealand, on the brig *Lalla Rookh*, and left Australia for ever.

6

Heralded by the *Marlborough Press* when he reached the Sounds, he already had sufficient merchandise to start a store, which Mr. Hornby had built for him on Wellington Street, near the quay. A "General Merchant" he called himself—a grocer, really, and an auctioneer.

Again, as at the goldfields, he chose a place which *almost* made his fortune. Picton, on the shores of a sheltered and beautiful harbour like a quiet lake, was tucked into the valley surrounded by protective hills climbing to the south, making a barrier pierced only by the high and narrow pass to the Wairau Plains. From these hills, two jagged promontories inclined northward into the sea, forming the Queen Charlotte Sounds. Picton, facing north, enclosed by those steep and heavily bush-clad mountains, had one of the most easily defensible harbours in New Zealand. That, and its central position, nearly made it the seat of government.

In 1860, gold was discovered to the southward, at Wakamarina. When the rush came, four years later, the population doubled and the town had a tremendous boom; but though this was one of the richest fields ever discovered in New Zealand, prospectors were soon lured to the west coast. Wakamarina was "poor man's diggings"—most of the gold being picked up out of crevices.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Coal was discovered by prospecting diggers during the Wakamarina rush, but the deposit was so rich that they believed it had been left by a passing steamer, and nothing was done about it until its rediscovery, some years later. Then the Picton Coal Company was formed, but the mining was found too expensive, and it was abandoned. Yet no harbour in New Zealand was so well adapted for a coal port.

Neither Government, nor gold, nor coal brought wealth to Picton, nor to Arthur Beauchamp. As it was, he found wealth of a different sort. Something held him for ever to New Zealand, bound him especially to the Marlborough Sounds, rover though he might be. It was said of him that he moved so often, his poultry went to sleep on their backs with their feet up, ready to be tied ; yet he spent more than thirty years of his rover's life on these Sounds. It was his one constancy.

In his early years at Picton, he threw himself vigorously into the struggle that was then waging for the life of the town. Picton, despite its early settlement, had no real importance until 1861, when it became the seat of the Provincial Government. The rich Wairau and Awatere valleys to the south had originally been taken by a class of cultured and educated men bred to the belief that land-holding was the inherited privilege of the few. Among these was the Hon. Algernon Tollemache. These land-owners ("squatters"), endeavouring to retain the lands and protect the sacred rights of property, had contrived separation from the neighbouring Nelson, and—under the federal form of

government then obtaining in New Zealand—had formed a separate, self-governing province which they named Marlborough. The port Waitoh they renamed Picton after Wellington's chief lieutenant at Waterloo.; and here they established the seat of government, shifting it from Blenheim, a larger inland town, the home of the Opposition, which was chiefly composed of townsmen and small farmers. The Blenheim party, led by a Mr. Eyes, "considered any legislation legitimate which might dissolve the old Council and turn the scales against Picton"; in consequence, the issue of "Picton *v.* Blenheim" dominated Marlborough politics.

Arthur Beauchamp naturally took sides with the squatters. Here his early English associations provided his necessary support. He could take his place among these men without seeming to be a "climber." He adapted himself readily to politics; his political attitude coincided with his interests and inclinations, and he quickly held a prominent position in the Council, and was regarded as Picton's ablest champion—"a sound man."

To the Picton representatives it was a matter of life and death that the seat of government should be retained. If the government were moved, Picton would forfeit her glory, which depended entirely on pride of place. Still more important, she would lose "the opulence derived from a liberal expenditure of Government money."

Until the gold rush to Wakamarina, the squatters succeeded in holding their own; but the influx of population gave Blenheim more electoral votes, added to which land questions arose causing so much

friction among the Picton members of the Council that some members threatened to go over to the Opposition unless matters mended. The Blenheim party seized the opportunity of this division, and on the second day of the 1864 session, Mr. Godfrey of Blenheim moved: "That the Council do now adjourn until Thursday, 29th instant, at three o'clock p.m., and hold its next and subsequent meetings at the courthouse, Blenheim."

Upon this motion, followed the most heroic debate in the politics of New Zealand. To Blenheim it was the culmination of years of discontent; to Picton it was a fight against extinction. For days the battle waged, both parties being heart and soul in an issue which concerned their interests so closely. This was the occasion which gave Arthur Beauchamp his fame in the early politics of New Zealand. Led by him, Picton made one last despairing stand. He himself took the floor. He was a young man—still in his thirties. Behind his endurance was experience in luring and holding the restless, lawless Melbourne diggers. Behind that training there were the Byron competitions with his father in Hornsey Lane.

"He brought to the assistance of his party" (says New Zealand history) "a verbosity worthy of the occasion. Hour after hour he held the fort with a dogged devotion that would have done honour to Sir Thomas Picton himself." Finally, "after speaking for the best part of a day, he struck terror into the hearts of those weary ones anxiously waiting the division, by explaining that 'with these few preliminary remarks, he would now proceed to speak on the subject under discussion.'" But

human endurance has its limits, and after ten and a half hours "of single-handed combat," he collapsed. The substance of his speech is nowhere preserved, but the Opposition *Marlborough Press*, naturally vituperative to a rival, described it as "ten and a half hours of rubbish, ribaldry and Billingsgate."

Since the fatal division could no longer be delayed the Resolution was passed and forwarded to Superintendent Seymour, who replied that "the course pursued by the Council was contrary to the Constitution, which fixed the session at Picton."

Motions calling for the resignation of the Superintendent were only defeated by his friends leaving the room and depriving the Council of a quorum. But his Superintendency ended with that session, and the great battle of Blenheim *v.* Picton was virtually over. The population of the province had increased in the sheep districts near Blenheim, giving it additional electoral power, and when the Council met in October, 1865, "there was an assured majority to carry out the resolutions of the previous Council."

The last episode in this struggle was "the handing in by Mr. Beauchamp of a protest against the Council proceeding to elect a Superintendent." Mr. Eyes, the main supporter of the Opposition, was proposed and elected, though "the Picton representatives showed their contempt for the proceedings by leaving in a body."

Within the next three weeks the seat of government was transferred from Picton, and "that little town suffered a relapse from which it has never recovered." Its total population in 1886 was hardly more than 700; and when in the 1890's, Katherine Mansfield paid the visit to The True Original Pa Man, her

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

grandfather, which is so beautifully remembered in *The Voyage*, Picton had gone to sleep for ever.

For a few more years Arthur Beauchamp continued in political life, being a member of the Marlborough Provincial Council from September 17th, 1864, to September 8th, 1865; and from October 8th, 1865 to October 9th, 1866. In 1866 he was elected to represent Picton in the New Zealand House of Representatives, taking his seat in the Fourth Parliament in April. But as a member of this Parliament, he was not very happy, and gave up his seat within six months, before making any definite mark. Apparently he did not even offer the customary reason for withdrawal, for the space after his name in the Parliamentary Records remained a blank.

Some of his comments during debate have been preserved in the New Zealand Parliamentary Records. They faintly recall the fantastic humour of a figure who became a legend in his life-time, and fascinated the imagination of Katherine Mansfield.

“ Mr. Beauchamp said he had been listening to this debate with much pleasure, whether awake or asleep. Before going into the difficulties of Auckland, he would allude to the scientific discovery of the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fitzherbert) that the shadow precede the substance. He had not thought it a just remark as applied to the honourable member for Avon. This debate was assuming now a theatrical form : there had been tragedy, melodrama, high comedy, and low comedy : but the exhibition that displeased him most was that of the honourable member for the Otago Goldfields (Mr. Vogel). He

THE PA MEN

considered that the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fitzherbert) made a very good speech though his arguments were hardly so weighty as they might have been. With regard to Auckland, it had once been in a very flourishing state ; but during the war, though he could not state exactly the origin of it, there had been a kind of artificial prosperity, which had raised the expectations of the people. Auckland had a grievance, but it had not been stated : that was the removal of the seat of Government, although the Auckland members might not admit it. The removal of the seat of Government might have been expedient and politically necessary, but it was not the least unjust. Then a kind of collapse occurred in Auckland, which had prostrated the energies of the people. This debate evidently showed that something should be done for that province, with which he sympathized, for he had suffered in his own province by the removal of the seat of Government ; but he had not caved in, and he would not advise the people of Auckland to do so. Their sufferings were, however, only temporary, and might be alleviated, but not by Separation. It would not do to tinker with the Native difficulty, for that would only disturb the Natives. With regard to Otago, its case was not half so good a one as that of Auckland. That province, at one extremity of the Islands, had joined with a province at the other extremity to tear out the vitals of the colony—a most injudicious proceeding. The honourable member for Raglan appeared to him to have set up a golden calf, which he wished the colony to worship ; but he hoped it would do no such thing. He was to some extent a goldfields member : he meant to say that he was a member for a collapsed goldfield—Wakamarina. He was sorry, therefore, to see the conduct of some of the goldfields members, and believed it was not approved of by the miners generally. For his part, he wished to see a strong central Government. He had gone through poetries Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4 ; he would now go to poetry No. 5,

the age of boyhood. Honourable members would recollect seeing a picture of a boy scratching his head, being puzzled over a sum. He thought it a world of art, in which fresh beauties could easily be discovered—he did not mean in the boy scratching his head. (The honourable member closed his speech with the following words :

“ ‘ Separation is a vexation :
Division is as bad :
The rule-of-three, it puzzles me,
And factions drive me mad.’ ”

“ In another speech Mr. Beauchamp said he had intended to make a suggestion as to the form in which additional taxes, if necessary, should be raised, for he thought the Government had pursued a wrong course in saying that they would only have stamp duties, as it had placed many members in an embarrassment—among others the honourable member for Westland, who, after creating the Government, as it were, like Warwick the King-maker, found that, like Frankenstein, he had created a monster, which was going to *stamp* at him and master him. Noses had, he believed, been counted, so that perhaps it was not of much use continuing this discussion longer : but he thought the Government was like a spoilt child crying for stamps, and expecting the House to say, ‘ There, then ! it shall have stamps.’ (The honourable member then illustrated some remarks by telling an episode in the life of Jack the Giant-killer, and compared the similes of the Colonial Treasurer to soap-bubbles, and concluded after some further remarks of a humorous nature.) ”

If Arthur Beauchamp ever had much money, he probably lost it in Picton. Few men made much there ; many lost fortunes. The final blow came in 1879, when New Zealand was involved in the great world depression. Not only were the majority

THE PA MEN

of Marlborough landholders ruined, but many business men also ; and Picton finally relapsed into the inertia of a little out-of-the-way seaside town, where time ceases to be very important—the future too monotonous to bear contemplation : where life is “like living at the bottom of a well,” as a Picton spinster said.

Arthur Beauchamp carried on his “General Merchant Store,” and his auctioneering, for ten years there, paying his £50 per annum licence fee, a very substantial part of the town’s total annual revenue of £600. He added greatly to his auctioneer’s repertoire, during that time, and some of his mysterious jingles (“Dolly of milk no resembles”), and his verses of Maori place names have become New Zealand folk-lore :—

“ Ohau can I cross the river Ohau,
O Waikanae not reach the shore ?
Otaki a boat and row me across
In the Manawatu did before.”

He died in 1910 at the age of eighty-three. There is a picture of him in one of Katherine’s letters :

“ My grandpa said a man could travel all over the world with a clean pair of socks and a rook rifle. At the age of 70 he started for England thus equipped, but Mother took fright and added a handkerchief or two. When he returned he was shorn of everything but a large watering can which he had bought in London for his young marrows. I don’t suggest him as a Man to be Followed, however.”

No doubt this was the large red watering can which stood on one side of the door, with the pair of old bluchers on the other, when after *The Voyage*

Fenella went up the dewy garden at Picton. While she stroked the white cat in the dusky sitting-room, she listened to grandma's gentle voice and the rolling tones of grandpa. Then she went in.

"There, lying to one side of an immense bed, lay grandpa. Just his head with a white tuft, and his rosy face and long silver beard showed over the quilt. He was like a very old wide-awake bird."

7

Harold Beauchamp (who was to be the father of Katherine Mansfield) thus belonged to the first generation of New Zealand-born pioneers. It was the generation which still spoke of England as "home" (in the manner of its fathers), yet preserved a silence, very eloquent, concerning personal relation to the colony. If at heart the men still were Englishmen, they were in soul New Zealanders.

The energy of the new generation was needed in the colony now. The tireless struggle of the older pioneers at the bottom of the world, remote from any real aid (since they would not and could not look to Australia, but only to England), brought the primitive stage of colonisation to an end only forty years after the *Tory* had anchored on the edge of a remote and savage wilderness. By this time (1879) Harold Beauchamp had been in Wellington, the capital, for three years. At eighteen, when he started out for himself, he rode on a brief tide of prosperity. The financial courage of Sir Julius Vogel, the Colonial Treasurer, who with the colony owing seven millions, dared to borrow ten, had

brought eight years of commercial success. The wool market rose, trade increased, roads, railways and telegraphs were built. New Zealand became a modern country.

"Hal," as he was known to his contemporaries (he became "Sir Harold" forty-seven years later knighted for "distinguished public service, particularly in connection with financial matters") began as clerk in an importing firm. He had been "privately educated," in the usual school of the pioneer; but until he was thirteen, and his father left Picton for Wanganui, he attended the Picton dame's school, a little house-boat standing high on stilts, taught by old Mrs. Currie—and a curious curriculum she did teach. At school he far outstripped the other six little Beauchamps, as his contemporaries at the school—Mr. Hornby's daughters among them—well remember. He set the pace and easily held his own.

His independence was soon manifest. After leaving the Collegiate School at Wanganui (where Arthur Beauchamp had been Government valuer and auctioneer from 1872 to 1876), he went his own decided way. He chose to remain in Wellington, while his father tried sawmilling in Manaroa in the Pelorus Sound.

"Hal," at eighteen, was a stocky youth, filled with his own fire, alert, elastic, careful to keep fit with walking and exercises even when busy, and finding leisure for football and boating. He was "musical," too, though he never had learned to play any instrument. His bright blue eyes, rather prominent, often had a deceptive look of helplessness.

ness. To his father's vein of humour, and his propensity for telling and enjoying a good tale, he added logic ; and to his tenacious memory he added tenacious will. He had a flair for finance. Very early he determined to become both wealthy and influential in the new country.

For a while he lived in lodgings in Molesworth Street, with five other boys, including Charlie Palliser—a blue-eyed Irish youth, towering well over six feet, after whose great-grandfather the New Zealand Cape and Bay were named. In the 1870's Molesworth Street, running parallel to the Quay, was practically wilderness. The native Waipirau *whare* (site of the first Government house), lay at the lower end ; but except for a store and a few boarding-houses it was only a sandy road still encroached on by native bush. The six boys held a sitting, one night, over a leg of mutton. Mutton was New Zealand's main product. It could be had for a shilling a leg ; and the landlady had served it for six consecutive evenings, cold. After the sitting, the court decreed that it be put out in the road ; and when the landlady came down to carve, they told her where to go to find it. With it was a note : “ No more cold mutton. We're going to have our meat hot.”

When he was twenty-six, in 1884, he married Annie Burnell Dyer, daughter of Joseph Dyer, who had been a pioneer of Australia, and the first resident secretary of the Australian Mutual Provident Society in New Zealand. Margaret Mansfield Dyer, his wife, and the youngest daughter, Bell Dyer, left the big house on the corner of Burnell

Avenue, overlooking the Harbour, and went to live with the Beauchamps in Hawkstone Street.

The Dyers were all beautiful women. Annie Burnell, finely made, seemed almost too slight and small to contain so much delight in sheer living. The thrill, the novelty of simply finding herself alive never had worn off for her. An opalescent morning, a cluster of rata blossom, the mock-orange tree at the gate—almost any slight or lovely thing could fill her with the exhilaration that another would find in glorious adventure. Yet her hold upon life was curiously slight—just this thin chain of casual delight.

Of her—when she died, in 1918, with the same high and delicate courage with which she had lived, slipping off without telling a soul to a nursing-home for an operation which she knew might be, and which was, fatal—Katherine wrote :

“She *lived* every moment of life more fully and completely than anyone I’ve ever known—and her gaiety wasn’t any less real for being *high courage*—courage to meet anything with. Ever since I heard of her death my memories of her come flying back into my heart—and there are moments when it’s unbearable to receive them. But it has made me realise more fully than ever before that I love *courage*—spirit—poise (do you know what I mean? all these words are too little) more than anything.”

Was it the ambiguous look of helplessness in Hal Beauchamp’s eyes that drew her to him? He seemed always to need her : to help him find his things ; to reassure him ; to support and companion him in so many ways. With her slimness, and small, finely-cut features beneath heavy chestnut hair, she

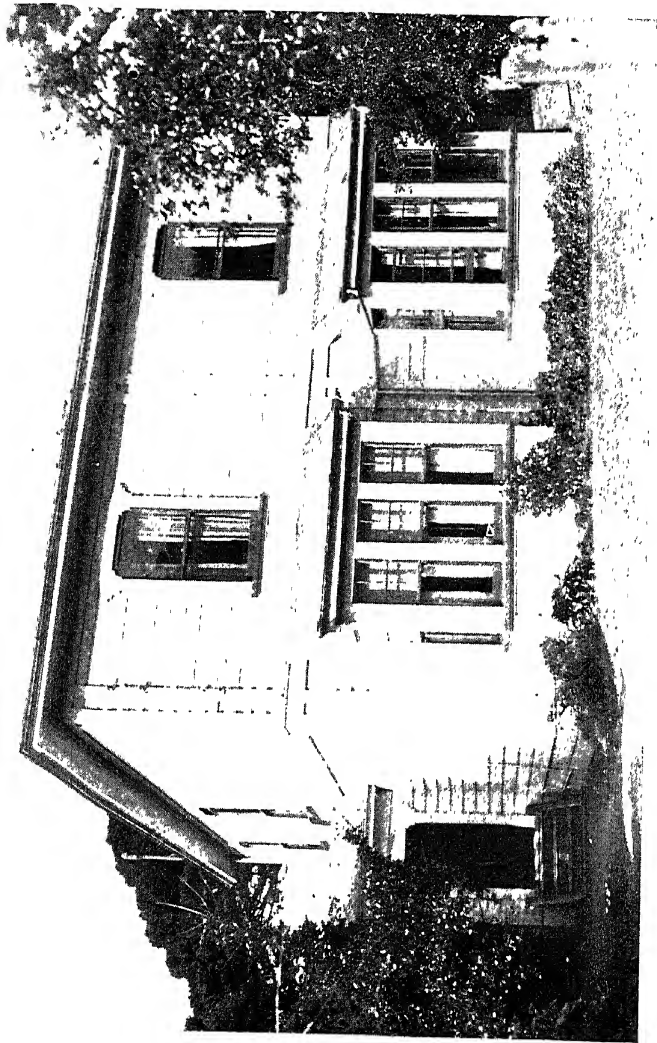
THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

looked frail beside his vigorous ruddiness, especially when (as at their first appearance at a "recital") he sat leaning heavy against her shoulder.

The younger sister, Bell, the "family beauty," had the attitude naturally accompanying this distinction ; but in "Grandmother" (Margaret Mansfield Dyer) was the flexible adaptability of a dramatic artist. But it was instinctive and unconscious : she adjusted herself naturally to the parts for which she was cast. She had married when very young, and worked as hard as the pioneer woman must for an eccentric husband, one son and three daughters. But her difficult, active life had not altered her. She was exquisite in personal habits—in old age—exquisite in person, immaculate, with clear fair skin and hair soft under her cap, which she wore as though it were an ornament.

Annie had been "delicate," and "had a heart" ; she was different from the other two girls. Grandmother Dyer easily stepped into the way of doing necessary things in the furnished house in Hawkstone Street.

Vera Margaret was born the following year, and Charlotte Mary, the next. They all moved to Hill Street in 1886. Shortly before Kathleen Mansfield was born, in 1888, Harold Beauchamp built his first home, at 11 Tinakori Road, next door to Walter Nathan's big one, No. 13, on the corner. (Walter Nathan was Mr. Beauchamp's business partner in an importing firm.) No. 11 was the standardised earthquake-proof style : a square, wooden box-like house ; but with the distinction of a stained-glass door let into the little front porch. It was through



BIRTHPLACE OF K. M.
11 TINAKORI ROAD, WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

this coloured glass that Kezia looked out at a "little Chinese Lottie" on that last night before they moved from Tinakori Road to Karori.

"Tinakori" is a Maori phrase—not a place name at all, but a phrase meaning "lunchless," or "unsatisfied," from the Maori's complaint: "*O! tin a kore, tin a kore,*" when the overseers suggested working through the noon hour to finish laying the last lap of road. Tinakori Road, upon which Kathleen Beauchamp was to live for ten years of her life and which was to be the scene of two of her finest stories, ran down the hill, past the Botanical Gardens, toward Lambton Quay and the windy Esplanade. It seemed to have bit into the gardens of the box-like houses, robbing them of all but a small square of grass between the front porch and the fence of painted palings or iron rails. A patterned balustrade, like lace, stretched across the second storey; often a matching web dripped down from the eaves. Running parallel with the road, the Tinakori Hills rose abruptly to a thousand feet—wooded heavily toward Karori beyond the Botanical Gardens; mottled with brown and fresh green, splashed yellow with gorse toward the Harbour.

The house at 11 Tinakori Road where Kathleen Mansfield Beauchamp was born and lived for her first six years, faced these hills. Behind it lay a deep rift, a gorge cutting toward the Harbour. Overgrown with "a wild tangle of green," bordered with pines twisted by winds blowing up from the sea, it was the first thing she looked upon (uncomprehending) on the day of her birth.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

That Harold Beauchamp should have owned—should have had built for him—a home in 1888 indicated no little activity in one who had started with “nothing”; for those had been years of unbroken depression in New Zealand. When the world depression of 1879 struck the colony, New Zealand fairly reeled before it. The older generation, in many cases, paid with all they had. The depression in New Zealand was to last for sixteen years; yet to those born there it was a challenge by which to test their fighting strength. Curiously enough, the hardest year of all was 1888, in which Kathleen Beauchamp was born. In that year the Bank of New Zealand (with which Sir Harold was later to be identified) was tottering, involved by heavy mortgages on lands which had sunk in value. Only the legislation of Richard Seddon saved it in 1894, by procuring Government aid and control.

Here, obviously, was neither time nor chance to cultivate the arts. Isolated at the bottom of the world, the New Zealand of Kathleen Beauchamp's childhood had no “leisure”—no “cultured class.” When talent did appear, the artist was sent to study at “home” where—for one reason or another—he usually remained. Yet New Zealanders were proud, justly and sensitively proud, of what they had built up; so a situation arose which was to make it difficult for Katherine Mansfield, as she grew older—and difficult, indeed, for New Zealand to comprehend her, afterward.

Years later, “the little Colonial” still, looking back with longing from the various points of her exile, she was to rediscover the heritage she had

THE PA MEN

received from the Pa Men. If England was to teach her *how* to write, New Zealand—Wellington, the Sounds, Karori—had given her what she was to write about.

CHAPTER II

WELLINGTON: 11 TINAKORI ROAD

"Coming continually on the spirit with a fine suddenness."—*Keats*.

I

THE True Original Pa Man coined a phrase which became part of the Beauchamp heritage :

"The umbrageous hills kissed the waters of the South Pacific." This was "very Pa," Katherine Mansfield thought, and she laughed at it as one laughs at things because one likes them. She herself had a "special" feeling for certain places that she knew in New Zealand : Day's Bay, and "the ferny paths" through the manukas and tree ferns ; Anikiwa on Marlborough Sounds ; Karori. As she looked back, they became "a kind of possession." She *belonged* to that Island. Her navel string had been fastened to it, and from it she was nourished.

The grandmother had so often told her of the storm on the day of her birth, that she more than half believed she remembered it, herself :

"She had come forth squealing out of a reluctant mother in the teeth of a 'Southerly Buster.' The Grandmother, shaking her before the window, had seen the sea rise in green mountains and sweep the esplanade. The little house was like a shell to its loud booming. Down in the gully the wild trees

lashed together and big gulls wheeling and crying skimmed past the misty window."

She was born at eight o'clock on Sunday morning, October 14th, 1888. It was early spring in Wellington, and azaleas were out in the Botanical Gardens.

She might have been born of the wind and the sea on that wild morning. "The voice of her lawless mother the sea" called to her all of her life; she was "the sea child" of her early poem.

"Into the world you sent her, mother,
Fashioned her body of coral and foam
Combed a wave in her hair's warm smother
And drove her away from home."

She never was happy far from it, not happy for long with it. When Cornwall, Ospedaletti, the South of France, reminded her of New Zealand, she was at home while the illusion lasted. But wind always frightened her. It brought back the night terrors of childhood and made it impossible for her ever to live long alone.

From the time she was fifteen and first seriously trying to "write," her notebooks were filled with such beginnings as :

"The storm on the day of her birth. Now to plan it—She is born in New Zealand on the day of the storm."

The storm at her birth seemed to have some mysterious significance for her which was part of her being and must be expressed.

In *The Birthday*, as it was first published with a New Zealand setting, she developed that storm into

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

part of her story ; but when she rewrote it for *The German Pension*, she transferred the setting to Germany. It was not what she meant : it was not "that Island." It merely reflected her ironic state. In *The Aloe* she tried once more to describe it ; but when she revised the tale as *Prelude*, she omitted the description. She felt, it seemed, that the storm at her birth had a meaning which lay beyond words. It belonged, in its elusiveness, with *The Voices of the Air*.

2

In later years, Katherine Mansfield was laughingly disappointed over her early appearance. When her sister "Marie" sent her a photograph of herself as a baby, it was a "dreadful shock" :

"I had always imagined it—a sweet little laughing thing, rather French, with wistful eyes under a fringe, firmly gripping a spade, showing even then a longing to dig for treasure with her own hands. But this little solemn monster with a wisp of hair, looked as though she were just about to fall over backwards head overheels ! On her feet she wears, as far as I can make out, a pair of ordinary workman's boots which the photographer, from astonishment or malice, has photographed so close up that each tootsie is the size of her head. The only feature about her is her ears which are neatly buttonholed on to the sides of her head and not just safty-pinned on as most babies' are. Even the spade she clasps with the greatest reluctance."

But it was hardly a fair picture, for she had jaundice at three months old, and was sent to Anikiwa, in the Sounds, where her cousins remember her as "a

yellow, ill-looking baby " who took an inexplicable fancy to a certain stone in the garden, and refused to be quiet unless they sat on the uncomfortable seat and nursed her.

Knowing (as did *The Thoughtful Child*) that " the right sort of people must expect children to sit on them," she fortunately had a lap undisputedly her own for her first two years. She had been her grandmother's child from the moment the old woman so unceremoniously shook her before the streaming window on the night she was born in the " Southerly Buster." Her father was ordered " home " to England for a cure soon after her birth. Since he could never think of going far without his wife, Kathleen Mansfield was left in her grandmother's care. She was always to be more Mansfield than she was Kathleen. Margaret Mansfield Dyer was spiritual godmother to her, as well as grandmother.

Most children pass in the accepted manner through the hands of the angel who (in the Garden Behind the Moon where they shine the stars) wipes each child's mind clean with a sponge when he reaches the age of three. But there was one corner in the mind of Kathleen Beauchamp which never was erased. It was the memory of a morning two days before her second birthday :

" Things happened so simply then, without preparation and without any shock. They let me go into my mother's room. (I remember standing on tiptoe and using both hands to turn the big white china door-handle) and there lay my mother in bed with her arms along the sheet, and there sat my grandmother before the fire with a baby in a flannel

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

across her knees. My mother paid no attention to me at all. Perhaps she was asleep, for my grandmother nodded and said in a voice scarcely above a whisper, 'Come and see your little sister.' I tiptoed to her voice across the room, and she parted the flannel, and I saw a little round head with a tuft of goldy hair on it and a big face with eyes shut—white as snow. 'Is it alive?' I asked. 'Of course,' said grandmother. 'Look at her holding my finger.' And—yes, a hand, scarcely bigger than my doll's, in a frilled sleeve, was wound round her finger. 'Do you like her?' said my grandmother. 'Yes. Is she going to play with the doll's house?' 'By-and-by,' said the grandmother, and I felt very pleased. Mrs. Heywood had just given us the doll's house. It was a beautiful one with a verandah and a balcony and a door that opened and shut and two chimneys. I wanted badly to show it to someone else.

" 'Her name is Gwen,' said the grandmother. 'Kiss her.'

"I bent down and kissed the little goldy tuft. But she took no notice. She lay quite still with her eyes shut.

" 'Now go and kiss mother,' said the grandmother.

"But mother did not want to kiss me. Very languid, leaning against the pillows, she was eating some sago. The sun shone through the windows and winked on the brass knobs of the big bed.

"After that grandmother came into the nursery with Gwen and sat in front of the nursery fire in the rocking chair with her. Meg and Tadpole were away staying with Aunt Harriet, and they had gone before the new doll's house arrived, so that was why I so longed to have somebody to show it to. I had gone all through it myself, from the kitchen to the dining-room, up into the bedrooms with the doll's lamp on the table, heaps and heaps of times.

" 'When will she play with it?' I asked grandmother.



GRANDMOTHER DYER,
BABY GWEN & THE DOLL'S HOUSE

“ ‘By-and-by, darling.’

“ It was spring. Our garden was full of big white lilies. I used to run out and sniff them and come in again with my nose all yellow.

“ ‘~~Can~~’t she go out?’

“ At last, one very fine day, she was wrapped in the warm shawl and grandmother carried her into the cherry orchard, and walked up and down under the falling cherry flowers. Grandmother wore a grey dress with white pansies on it. The doctor’s carriage was waiting at the door, and the doctor’s little dog, Jackie, rushed at me and snapped at my bare legs. When we went back to the nursery and the shawl was taken away, little petals like feathers fell out of the folds. But Gwen did not look, even then. She lay in grandmother’s arms, her eyes just open to show a line of blue, her face very white, and the one tuft of goldy hair standing up on her head.

“ All day, all night grandmother’s arms were full. I had no lap to climb into, no pillow to rest against. All belonged to Gwen. But Gwen did not notice this; she never put up her hand to play with the silver brooch that was a half-moon with five little owls sitting on it; she never pulled grandmother’s watch from her bodice and opened the back by herself to see grandfather’s hair; she never buried her head close to smell the lavender water, or took up grandmother’s spectacle case and wondered at its being really silver. She just lay still and let herself be rocked.

“ Down in the kitchen one day old Mrs. MacKelvie came to the door and asked Bridget about the poor little mite, and Bridget said, ‘Kep’ alive on bullock’s blood hotted in a saucer over a candle.’ After that I felt frightened of Gwen, and I decided that even when she did play with the doll’s house I would not let her go upstairs into the bedroom—only downstairs, and then only when I saw she could look.

“ Late one evening I sat by the fire on my little

carpet hassock and grandmother rocked, singing the song she used to sing to me, but more gently. Suddenly she stopped and I looked up. Gwen opened her eyes and turned her little round head to the fire and looked and looked at, and then—turned her eyes up to the face bending over her. I saw her tiny body stretch out and her hands flew up, and ‘Ah ! Ah ! Ah !’ called the grandmother.

“Bridget dressed me next morning. When I went into the nursery I sniffed. A big vase of the white lilies was standing on the table. Grandmother sat in her chair to one side with Gwen in her lap, and a funny little man with his head in a black bag was standing behind a box of china eggs.

“‘Now !’ he said, and I saw my grandmother’s face change as she bent over little Gwen.

“‘Thank you,’ said the man, coming out of the bag. The picture was hung over the nursery fire. I thought it looked very nice. The doll’s house was in it—verandah and balcony and all. Gran held me up to kiss my little sister.”

Of course, the picture over the fireplace would have helped to keep the recollection real ; though, as a matter of fact, it did become a bit confused, for the cherry trees belonged to Karori, several years later—not to Wellington ; and old Mrs. MacKelvie belonged to Karori, too. But the birth of the little sister, that spring, was really true, and that first sense of threatened security was poignant enough—the child’s first realisation of aloneness—of standing outside looking in upon the one loved and secure who had taken her place—was keen and sharp enough, to be remembered always. The Grandmother was her security, and was still to be, as she looked back, twelve years later, from illness and loneliness in Bavaria :

"The only adorable thing I can imagine is for my grandmother to put me to bed and bring me a bowl of hot bread and milk, and standing with her hand folded, the left over the right, say in her adorable voice, 'There, darling, isn't that nice?' To wake later and find her turning down the bedclothes to see if my feet were cold, and wrapping them in a little pink singlet, softer than cat's fur. . . . Alas !"

While she was still too little to "have taken to pothooks," and so hadn't yet folded herself away into books (though she was not too young to have heard *The Child's Garden of Verses*), what did this aloof, rather silent and dreamy child find to charm her into her own world?

Let her tell it herself as she remembered, in flying fragments, and as she wrote it—before ever she had left New Zealand—for a friend who kept it until this day. In her memory, no doubt, it was idealised, sentimentalised even, but beneath it is the real movement of a child's mind, and the movement of the mind of a real child.

"The Child, standing on a chair by the window calls: 'Father, Mother, the garden's on fire.' She is right. Over the white house a Virginia creeper has run like a thin sheet of flame and when she saw the sumac tree in the avenue: 'I would like to warm my hands there; it would nearly *make toast*.'"

"Her white furs have come out of the hat box—'a little smelly, but such a comfy smell.' She wears a small red jacket over her white frocks and—'Look at my new woollen legs. Now I can walk twice as far as you because I've four.' . . ."

"Beyond the garden gate the road walks over a hill away from people and houses.

"'It's running away from the shops,' and we know,

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

could we but walk far enough, it would run right into the sea. 'Does it go on then?'

" 'Why, of course, right through a coral forest, pink and white where the Sea King's daughters play "Here we go gathering sea weed grapes," and blow the loveliest tunes through little silver shells.' And, if you do not stop to comb your curls or eat a little anemone jelly you would come right out on the other side. There you would find ladies sitting under big umbrellas, reading "Little Black Sambo" to children with brown cotton gloves and veils over their faces—and that would be England.' . . .

"Now from the top of the hill there is a whole valley full of trees; below us—pine trees—with their brown rug tucked round their big toes—a little bunch of oak trees—with an air of crisp daintiness about them which makes us shudder at the thought of the next wind storm. But the poplars are stiff and straight and naked already—like giant broom sticks for giant witches. 'Oh, do not walk through a poplar grove at night in Autumn. Who knows but that you might see their huge, hag-like forms rooting terribly at the trees—tearing them out of the dull earth—riding up over the face of the world and snatching at the stars with their claw-like fingers.'

" 'Oh, *look*, a sparrow—a little boy sparrow. Whistling on the top of that willow tree. Look at his fur blowing about. . . . He looks as though he was waving a hanky at me. I wish I could hold him inside my jacket here, and take him home—he'd be so warm.'

"She walks all the way back, 'because it's *down*.' . . .

"So she finds the world a kind place. She is not haunted by the decay of Autumn, not chilled by the paralysis of Winter. To her it is firelight, then the softest, gentlest sleep—and the white shroud is only a night gown; the bare earth—a bed for a little girl."

"The Child returned home from a visit to Aunt Emily's.

“ ‘It was so nice. She has three kittens with trousers and a lady cat with a music and they all waggle themselves and sing a song.’

“ ‘And one kitten has a blue necktie and a face like Mummy.’

“ ‘Then Aunt Emily sent the whole party in a box half as big as the Child’s nursery. . . .

“ ‘In the afternoon . . . she sat very still a big tattered book on her knees.

“ ‘What are you reading?’

“ ‘Oh, just *things*.’

“ ‘Here, show me the book.’ The pages were turned, slowly, and little pieces read here and there :

“ ‘Yes, that was a monkey with a hat on, feeding a baby with porridge in a spoon. . . . I should think it *would* be frightened. Stolen the baby’s hat? I’m afraid you’re right. And that was an old man with a bird’s nest in his beard. . . . No, Mummy would have been disgusted. . . . But they certainly couldn’t help having plenty of crumbs. . . . There was Jenny Wren at her wedding, with Cock Robin. . . . Why a hanky over her face? Oh, it was a veil that ladies always wear then. . . . How did she keep it on when she flew? She must have kept her head tucked under Cock Robin’s wing. . . . And that was the old woman flying up to the moon in a basket. . . . Yes, *our* clothes basket.’

“ ‘This was a very old book. It belonged to her mother when she was a little girl.

“ ‘What is the fascination and charm of all these old old rhymes?

“ ‘Comb hair, comb,
Daddy’s gone to plough
If you want your hair combed
Have it combed now.’

“ ‘Oh, such a beautiful hymn.’ . . . the little child, standing on a chair by the window, looking out over the garden to the fields, and Daddy, ploughing even

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

at that early hour, would see a light at the windows and say, 'Oh, that's my little daughter having her hair combed.'

"Even the delicious adventures of Little Black Sambo and the irresponsible, intoxicated holiday glamour of Sam and Selina could not surpass these old verses :

" ' Little girl, little girl, where have you been ?
Gathering roses to give to the Queen.
Little girl, little girl, what gave she you ?
She gave me a diamond as big as my shoe.'

" ' But what does she do with the diamond—and it has no smell. . . . I would rather have the roses.'

"But here was another picture . . . the little girl courtseying low, half hidden behind the great bunch of roses, and the Queen, on her golden throne stretching out her hands for the flowers—her white hands—but she is used to thorns—and beside her, the diamond in a neat parcel tied with a ribbon. . . .

"The Child fell asleep . . . and took her way along the little white road hedged with blossoming briar roses—past the green meadows where children played with white lambs and led them by a blue ribbon beside the buttercup fringed pools—past the wayside cottage where Mrs. Punch was pinning Toby's clean neck frill on to the clothes line and Mr. Punch was reading 'Ernie at the Seaside' to the baby in long clothes.

"Far away up in the air an old woman in a basket. She was descending rapidly. 'Frightful lot of extra work these balloons are making,' said she frowning and muttering. 'They send the currents all wrong.'

" 'The currents,' said the Child. 'Is that where currants come from ?'

" 'Oh,' the old woman muttered, 'there are currents and currants, which of course tells you I have a sister in the currant business—' Hot Cross buns the old woman runs.' . . .

"From a minute house came the sound of a great many babies laughing and crooning. Inside, a row of the prettiest babies imaginable. And at the end of the room the teacher, a demure little person with great horn spectacles and a birch rod in her hand.

" 'I just wanted to say How do you do,' said the Child, 'and ask if the babies might sing the school song.'

" 'They're all too young,' said the Schoolmistress, 'but perhaps you would sing it for them?'

"The Child put her hands together, shook her back hair, and sang in a clear high voice :

" 'Little Nellie Nipkin, brisk and clean and neat
Keeps a little baby school in the village street
Teaches little pupils all that she can find
And keeps a little birch that teaches them to
mind.'

" 'Thank you,' said Miss Nipkin, 'but the birch is only a matter of form.'

"From the street came the sound of music . . . and there was the lady cat playing the violin, and the three little kittens with trousers. The Child clapped her hands.

" 'Hallo, hallo,' she said. 'I knew I would find you here.' The lady cat nodded brightly.

" 'What sweet little knickers your children have.'

" 'They are quite blithesome,' said the lady cat, and as we walk down the street into the market place we hear her violin, now faint, now clear. . . ."

3

Even when Kathleen was still of importance as "the baby" of the family—even then she often turned to her own duality for companionship—as Katherine turned, later, to Kezia. Her company in those days was with "the shadow children, thin

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

and small ” ; or the cabbage tree with its hair out of curl :

“ Never mind, cabbage tree, when I am taller
And if you grow, please, a little bit smaller,
I shall be able by that time, may be,
To make you the loveliest curls, cabbage tree.”

Later her sense of solidariness drew her very much deeper into a fantastic world. And then (as now, when she was small) her aloneness was closely connected with a certain fear : fear of wind, fear of night. From that earliest childhood she was haunted by fearful dreams that made her sleep poorly. In fact she preferred to go without sleep, at times—and trembled for the comfort of a candle in the hands of her mother or grandmother, when she was a child.

There were occasions when :

“ The wind keeps going creepy-creep
And waiting to be fed.”

and

“ Like an awful dog we had
Who used to creep around . . . ”

The fear of the wind, when she was small, was joined in her mind with fear of the doctor's little dog, “ Jackie,” who snapped at her bare legs when she was two. It was connected with her earliest memory, and it was a fearful one which lasted all her life. The horrors were perhaps the worst when they strayed from the companionable world of fantasy and betrayed her by precipitating her back, terrified, into the world of grown-ups for protection.

One of these strayed companions from her fanciful

world watched her grimly as she said her solitary good-bye to the darkening house in Tinakori Road. This was later when she was five. But it was a characteristic episode of her early days :

“ Her old bogey, the dark, had overtaken her, and now there was no lighted room to make a despairing dash for. Useless to call ‘ Grandma.’ . . . If she flew down the stairs and out of the house she might escape from *It* in time. *It* was round like the sun, *It* had a face. *It* smiled, but *It* had no eyes. *It* was yellow. When she was put to bed with two drops of aconite in a medicine glass *It* breathed very loudly and firmly and *It* had been known on certain particularly fearful occasions to turn round and round. *It* hung in the air. That was all she knew and even that much had been very difficult to explain to the grandmother. Nearer came the terror and more plain to feel the ‘ silly ’ smile. She snatched her hands from the window pane, opened her mouth to call Lottie, and fancied she did call loudly, though she made no sound—*It* was at the bottom of the stairs, waiting in the little dark passage, guarding the back door—but Lottie was at the back door, too ! ‘ Oh, there you are,’ she said cheerfully.”

Even “ the same old nightmare ” that often came from the grown-up world :

“ . . . the butcher with a knife and rope who grew nearer and nearer, smiling that dreadful smile, while she could not move, could only stand still crying out, ‘ Grandma, Grandma ’ . . . ”

could not have been as terrifying to *The Little Girl* as those disembodied *Ones* that escaped to pursue her in the dark, and sped through her dreams at night.

The Grandmother was the link between the

children and the grown-ups. After the birth of Gwen, her fourth child, the mother seems to have lived in the condition of aloofness in which she appears in *Prelude*, *The Aloe*, and *At the Bay*. The first six years of her married life had drained her energy ; she was surrounded by her family. Her husband, with his continual need of her support, took what time and life she had to spare. The children flitted about her in the little box-like house. She would go out among the flowers, for which she had a passion : arum lilies and pin-cushions around the little square mat of lawn in the front garden ; and to the wild gully, at the back—filled with green and tree ferns ; beyond that, the world appeared unreal.

But the Grandmother was still in close touch with domestic life. There is work to be done in the New Zealand homes, where maids are few and inadequate. A succession of Alices, "Alice-the-hired-girl," came and went, but the Grandmother, like all really good cooks, loved cooking, and by the time Kathleen was big enough to peel passion fruit for the little purple seeds to put in fruit salad, Vera was old enough to be a real help in the house.

Vera Margaret was everybody's favourite, and well she might be. She was one of those fortunate and contented children born to be "a comfort to her parents." She had her mother's rather effusive manner without her mother's natural hauteur. They all had this manner, except the small Kathleen. The atmosphere was more that of an English than a Colonial home. The children were well-behaved—taught to say "Gran, Dear" ; "Mother, Dear" ;

“Father, Dear”; and they all addressed one another indiscriminately as “darling.” If, at times, Vera seemed to the younger children to belong rather to the world of grown-ups, it was doubtless because—being the oldest, and having her father’s sense of responsibility—she felt accountable to the grown-ups for the younger ones. “To see Vera was to love her,” the Anikiwa cousins said: “to see Kathleen was to remember her.” Vera at eight was a tall, straight-backed girl (though she was threatened with curvature of the spine for a while); she had the high colour in her cheeks and lips that the Wellington wind whips into the faces of so many children. Her hair—brown like the mother’s—was in long, neat plaits. All the girls looked like the mother; but Kathleen had her mother’s colourless skin; the others had a touch of the father’s ruddy colouring.

Charlotte Mary (“Chaddie” familiarly, “Marie” more respectfully) was a year and a half older than Kathleen, and apparently followed the course of the other two. She wore her hair in ringlets, at six, and walked with her feet turned out. She was a charming and affectionate child, easy and soft of speech.

All three of the little girls were dressed alike. They wore jumper dresses on week-days, and freshly starched pinafores on Sundays. If company came for tea, the Grandmother slipped a fresh pinafore over the play frock. They had small black sandals with short socks, and bare knees that needed frequent scrubbing.

Kathleen’s wavy dark hair was about her shoulders

like Edna's in *Something Childish*, when she was very small. She was rather lumpish, and often called to the others : " Wait for me ! I can't hurry. I'm too fat——" One of the little Walter Nathans, of whom there were five, used to shout over the fence at her from No. 13 : " Fatty ! Fatty ! Fatty ! " To which she scorned to make reply.

Yet even when she was small, she cast a small black shadow of her father's temper. It was, she afterward thought, a little demon which possessed her—a " black monkey " :

" My Babbles has a nasty knack
Of keeping monkeys on her back. . . .

" She comes and stands beside my chair
With almost an offended air
And says : ' Oh, Father, why can't I ? '
And stamps her foot and starts to cry—

" She throws about her nicest toys
And makes a truly dreadful noise
Till Mother rises from her place
With quite a Sunday churchy face. . . .

" Never a kiss or one goodnight
Never a glimpse of candle light
Oh, how the monkey simply flies ! " . . .

In many other respects she was her father's daughter. They were alike in the wrong ways, and different in the right ones. But there was a twinkle between them and the bond of the " jolly voice " in which children " expect to be talked to " and in which he so often did talk to her. Kass shared her father's humour as fairly as she shared his temper. The real bond between the Pa Man and the child was the True Original Pa Man, who had given

them both their patrimony of wit. The children were brought up on his auctioneer's jingles as other children are raised on their father's old college songs. The small Beauchamps were veritably rocked to sleep on : " Ohau can I cross the river Ohau ? " and

" On the banks of the Wamangaroa
They discovered the bones of a moa,
The largest I ween that e'er was seen
On the banks of the Wamangaroa.
Its back measured two feet by the tape, Sir,
And it was a most elegant shape, Sir—
And he dug his own grave by the bright rippling
wave
On the banks of the Wamangaroa."

When he was feeling " jolly " and had exhausted his father's repertory, the Pa Man occasionally tried extempore of his own :

" Orua away gently in a small boat
For you must beware of the Horowhenua afloat."

Or he rolled off the pleasant greeting phrases that he and his father learned from the Maoris : *Kanui taku aroka atu kia oke* (Great is my love to you) . . . *Kia whiti tonu te ra kirunga kiao* (May the sunshine of happiness ever rest upon you).

These celebrations were usually over the dinner-table when the children were allowed to dine with the grown-ups.

Even when they were far too small to understand, the " jolly " voice rolled about them :

" ' Bread ? ' Plain or coloured, Miss ? Half a yard cut on the cross, I take it, with as little selvedge as possible."

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

The whimsical spirit of The True Original Pa Man presided over some feasts :

“ ‘ My father would say,’ said Burnell (as he carved), ‘ this must have been one of those birds whose mother played to it in infancy upon the German flute. And the sweet strains of the dulcet instrument acted with such effect upon the infant mind . . . ’.”

When, in after years, anything was “ very Pa,” it meant (in Katherine Mansfield’s private language), something with a style of its own, something which could withstand the current mode—something having individuality, vigour, flamboyancy.

There were the flashes when the father stopped for a twinkle with the children at home, and would draw for them strange and exciting dragons—“ dragons with seven bellies ” ; and there were the brief and intoxicating visits to the strange place where he lived during the day :

“ My father’s office. I smell it. . . . I see the cage of the clumsy wooden goods lift and the tarred ropes hanging.”

On his desk was a little brass pig, with a bristly mat of hair for wiping pens. It always stood on a pile of torn letters. When she had to stretch on tiptoe to look over the edge of the desk, it had been the first thing she reached for : the darling little gold pig ! With her delight in small quaint things, it seemed to her too, too lovely ! What was its significance, of what was it a symbol ?

When she went “ home ” to England for the last time it went with her. It stood on a pile of torn

letters on her own desk all the rest of her life ; and when she first knew she was to die, she said (among a very few other things) : “ Don’t let anything happen to my brass pig. I’d like Vera to have it.” In her will, afterward, she bequeathed it back to her father. This was strangely significant because very few *possessions*—in the material sense—were precious to her. She had few treasures during her lifetime, and these few she was likely to give away, impulsively, to any who seemed to be “ her people.” But this was a kind of talisman, a “ sign ” between the two of them—which meant, perhaps, that the bond could never be forgotten.

It had the same meaning between them—the same meaning for her, at least—as the little bunch of flowers that he left, years later, at the Casetta :

“ And here on the table are five daisies and an orchid that Father picked for me and tied with a bit of grass and handed me. If I had much to forgive him, I would forgive him much for this little bunch of flowers. What have they to do with it all ? ”

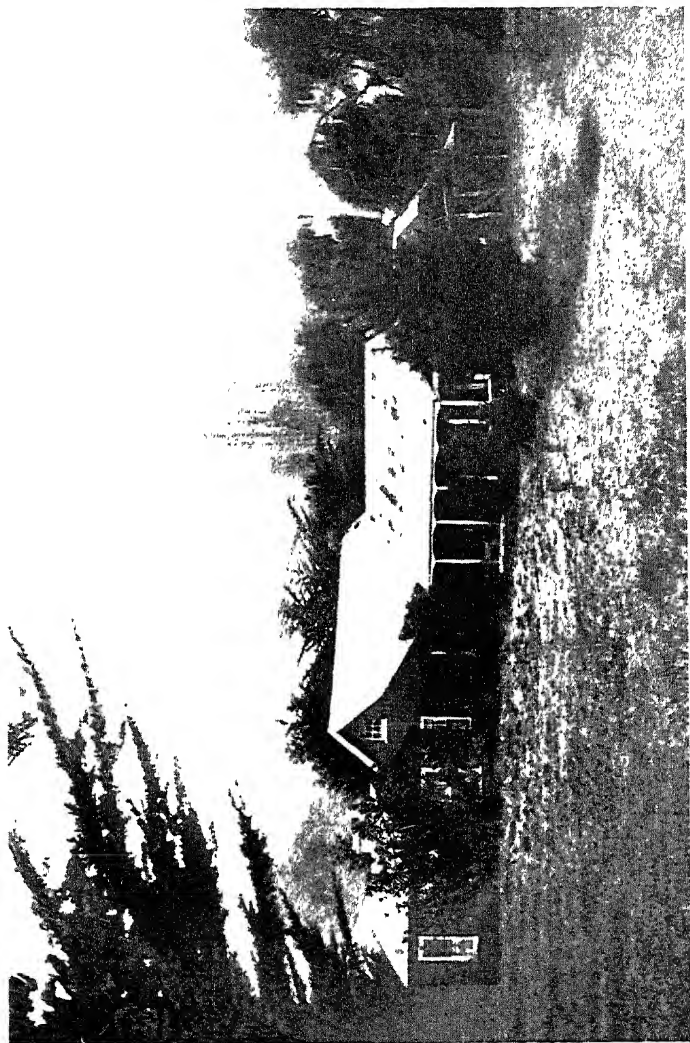
The bond was there. And Kathleen believed that her father, who had his fortune to make, his own career to follow, and lived in a world beyond, was essentially, in his hidden self, of her kind. In her imagination, he was a child battling with giants ; and she felt and suffered for him. She knew that behind the armour of the rising business man was the wincing and sensitive boy ; and she was instant in sympathy with him. When on a visit to the Riviera, during which he came to see her at the Casetta, his money-wallet was stolen, she quivered in an agony

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

of sympathy for his loss, as for a naked child in a winter storm :

“ I really literally nearly fainted when this swept over me and I ‘ saw ’ him with a very high colour putting on a smile. I do hope to God people don’t suffer quite as I think they do : it’s not to be borne if they do.”

But the battle with giants was his life, as she knew it. He was the business man who left the children to the women of the family. There they were, and that was an end of it.



ANIKIWA

“ . . . Nevertheless I find in my work a certain reverberation of what fascinated me. I know that nature told me something, that she spoke to me, and that I took her message in shorthand. Perhaps my transcript contains words that are undecipherable : belike there are faults and omissions in it, too—still it may possess something that the wood, the beach or the figures said.”—*Van Gogh*.

I

WHEN Kathleen—or Kass, as everyone in New Zealand called her—was just five, the Grandmother took the three little girls for their first of a series of summers at Anikiwa on the Sounds. The cruise in itself was an exciting adventure : “ to walk down the Old Wharf that jutted out into the harbour, a faint wind blowing off the water ” ; to take the Picton boat, “ a little steamer all hung with bright beads ” ; to sail the thirty-five miles from Wellington, across Cook Strait to Queen Charlotte Sound at the head of the South Island, and down the Sound—to Picton where the grandfather lived. And there the Picton boat swung at anchor, for it could go no further. Great-uncle Cradock had his own row-boat. That was the only way to reach Anikiwa, five miles further down the arm of the Sound.

It was calm water—a sea-fiord scalloped by sheltered bays—like lakes—almost surrounded by the steep hills. The bush : *manuka*, *karaka*, tree ferns,

ran down to the water's edge. Marlborough Sounds were really "drowned valleys," reminders from a long-gone period—back beyond the giant kauri pines—back to the moa. This might even have been "—the rippling wave where he dug his own grave . . ."

"Anikiwa" was the Maori word for "Cave of the Sea Birds." The old homestead was set in the midst of wide paddocks, surrounded by bush-covered hills that sloped to the Sound water. It was only three-fourths of a mile across, tapering to its end half a mile below the farm. Sea-birds flocked there by thousands. Captain Cook, years before, had spoken of the harmony of so many different kinds of birds from the bush, singing together in the early morning. They all sang in a minor key, on a sad note. "New Zealand birds, like New Zealand poets, have always been mournful." Kass could hear them at day-break from the room that she shared with the Grandmother under the honeysuckle vine . . . innumerable different notes : Tui, Bell-Bird, Thrush. She could hear the stream down in the paddocks. It was such a quiet sound after the surge of water under the wind that she always listened to from her room over the gully at Wellington. The air, too, was different. It was country air. The light over the paddocks was strange.

The cousins, boys in their 'teens, teased the little girls for their town ways, but they took them about with them while they did the farm work ; and there was bathing, boating and fishing to amuse them. They were happy little girls, but Kass was mostly the silent, dreamy one. She was fat and appeared rather

dull, but her big " mossy " eyes lighted with interest when one of the grown-ups took the trouble to speak directly to her, or told her about old Armena and the Maoris who had lived in the *pah* by the cemetery. She played *over* the farm, as the others did, but she was not interested in femininities. She didn't care about the details of her dress, or of the butterfly bow ribbons the girls wore perched on their hair. When Chaddie sat making neat little stitches in her doll's clothes, or Vera helped a bit in the kitchen, Kass preferred to talk to Armena or the grandfather, or play down by the streams. Her hands would never stay clean long enough for sewing, and she lost her ribbon bows.

The grandmother spoke sharply to her, at times. Yet Kass loved her. She always called to her when she came into the house : " Gran, dear, where are you ? "

Great-uncle Cradock wore a long white beard like grandfather Beauchamp's. Kass climbed on to his knee, one evening, and cast a quick little sidelong glance at Vera. Something very good was about to happen. Kass was going to plait Uncle Cradock's beard. He bounced Kass up and down, and began telling her about some flowers. Strangely, all of the Beauchamps shared this passionate love for flowers. He had written some verses with a little moral—something about flowers having personalities ; they never should be burned, never thrown into fire. Presently Vera slipped up softly behind them, and reached around Uncle Cradock's neck. " Don't plait it," said Kass fiercely ; " He's talking to *me* " ; and she gave her sister a sharp little pinch.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

It was doubtless from either the grandfather at Picton, or from Uncle Cradock, there at Anikiwa, that she heard the stories of Pelorus Jack. Both the old men had crossed the track of the solitary white dolphin many times when they sailed from Nelson, at the head of the south island, across the Cook Strait to Wellington. New Zealand children who were small before 1912 lived in a sort of fairy tale which had been begun three centuries before, according to Maori legend, when the god-fish Kaikai-a-warō, "flashing like fire in the darkness of the sea," swam slowly before the *mokihi* (or raft) of dried flax stalks, *korari*, in which the chieftain Koangaumu was escaping from his enemies, and piloted him safely across Cook Strait into smooth waters. Old Kipa Hemi Whiro, the *tohunga*, Maori wise man of the Sounds, who lived at the head of Anakoha Bay close to the mouth of Pelorus, claimed direct descent from this chieftain; Pelorus Jack, the white dolphin of the Sounds, was the incarnation of his ancestor's sea-god. The *tohunga* was the authority on ancestral history for the Maoris of the Sounds—quiet and earnest in manner, with a noble face—strong and intelligent. He had a club foot; the Maoris, for generations had set apart cripples and hunchbacks as tribal historians and priests. He was said to be the hereditary "owner" of Kaikai-a-warō, who during three centuries had answered the frantic *harakai* chant for aid in crossing the dangerous strait:

"*Ko wai, ko wai koa tera tangata e tere te moana?*"

(Who is that yonder, wandering on the face of the ocean?)

ANIKIWA

Hinepoupou, the Maori chieftainess, over a century before, had chanted this powerful incantation to the sea-god, as she cast off her flax mats and dived into those rough straits from the island Rangitito, where she had been deserted by her husband Manini-pounamu. And, indeed, she would need aid, for—powerful swimmers as the Maoris are—the pass was thirty or forty miles across at that point. But she was supported safely by Kaikai-a-warō and reached shore as serenely as Oberon's mermaid on a dolphin's back.

What other little girl ever lived in such a fairy tale? Pelorus Jack of these Sounds was one of the *taniwhas*, sea-deities of the deep who had been men—heroes who had led the Maoris tribes; and now:

“As Triton with his ‘wreathed horn’ preceded his ocean-riding father Poseidon, so the scythe-finned *taniwhas* of the Maori seas escorted their chiefs’ canoes; and so indeed to-day does Kaikai-a-warō, playing swiftly around the bows of the Trans-Cook Strait fire-canoes,—as if leading them on their way.”

That was one of the tremendously exciting things about going to Anikiwa; for they went almost—not quite, but *almost* far enough to see Pelorus Jack for themselves. If, instead of turning down Queen Charlotte Sound, they had gone on due north toward Nelson in Tasman Bay—if they had sailed as far as Alligator Head, even—he might have appeared, ghostly and white, from the sea-cave beneath the rock Kaimahi, to lead the ship, beyond Pelorus Sound, as far as French Pass—Te-au-miti, “The Licking Current.” And as they clung to the rail, thrilled and tense, half expecting him to be

incarnated from every white wave, they must have heard from some sailor or old traveller the mariner's tale of how Pelorus Jack was "discovered" in the 1870's by the master of *The Southern Cross*, and of how he barely escaped being harpooned because they thought he was a white whale-calf. It was not until later that he was classified as Risso's dolphin, and eventually protected by a special Order in Council of the New Zealand Government.

The day came when they actually did see him. They were taking a cruise with their family and the Seddons. The ship swung out from Lambton Harbour, north-west across Cook Strait toward "The Brothers" and the lighthouse. Here was where Captain Cook's *Endeavour* was so nearly lost in the 1770's. No ten-second flash winking then from Ngawhatu-kai-ponu, the Stinging Rocks which had long ago been made *tapu* by the Maoris, who veiled the eyes of strangers with three *karaka* leaves strung together "in deference to the mist-wreathed spirit of the rocks."

They sailed past the quiet Queen Charlotte Sound to the labyrinth of capes and headlands. They skirted the archipelago of rocky islands scattered along the rough outer coast; through the funnel-like Straits down which the wind pours everlastingly to Wellington. As they reached Alligator Head, the Captain strolled by with: "You can expect Pelorus Jack in ten minutes."

The grown-ups laughed, but before five minutes had gone they were standing behind the children, leaning tense and credulous over the prow.

"Here he comes!" somebody called.

ANIKIWA

Rolling like a disc over and under the waves, darting through them, leaping straight into the air like a porpoise, flashed a huge bluish-white dolphin tinged with purple and yellow. He made straight for the steamer's bow, rolling round about and under ; sometimes flashing ahead so swiftly that he was lost in the foam of the waves ; then appearing magically at the ship's side.

Darkness came on, dropping, as it does in those islands, quickly without twilight, with only a queer distortion of images. Through the shimmer of phosphorescence at the boat's prow plunged the white dolphin ; and like the sea-creatures in that other sea—so different, so becalmed—his every track " was a flash of golden fire."

The Pa Man put a pin into this pretty bubble of legend. Jack was a *grampus griseus* who had left his school further south. Probably he was infested with lice. He rubbed his itching back against the prow of the ship as a flea-bitten cow rubs her shanks against a byre post to scratch herself.

2

Cradock was a brother of Arthur Beauchamp ; his daughter Ethel was second cousin to the three little girls. She was an extremely tall, angular woman with fine warm blue eyes, and an expression so naturally sweet that even false teeth could not stiffen it. She had been engaged to Grimsdale Anderson for several years, but a series of unexpected misfortunes falling upon this young English pioneer

had prevented their marrying. Yet Ethel Beauchamp seemed only to grow more gracious with misfortune. Like all the Beauchamps, she had an almost inexhaustible supply of courage.

Her sister, a plump little fantail, had married Mr. Greensill, explorer and prospector of the Malay States. In one raid while he was away fighting, she had stayed alone to protect the household goods, even under the knife of a Chinese. She had been shipwrecked many times. When she was asked : " Weren't you frightened ? " she said, " I never have time to think about *that*. I have to be wondering what's going to happen."

Cousin Ethel, noticing that Kass was treated as " the difficult child," made special efforts to interest her or tell her a little story. She told her how Mahakipuna, between the Sounds, was named " The Smoke Goes up Straight," when the tall plume indicated fair weather and a propitious place for the Maoris who had just dragged their canoes onto land. She told her how Captain Cook had released the first pig in Queen Charlotte Sounds in 1773.

She took the child down to the old *pah* by the hill behind the homestead. Maoris had lived there when Cradock Beauchamp first settled, but now on the hill by the *pah* there was only the Maori burial ground. The rough wooden slabs were rotting under the trees.

Old Armena, who worked for the Anikiwa Beauchamps, was the last Maori left. She had been a tribal chieftain's daughter, of the best native blood ; and she was devoted to the English. To hear her

ANIKIWA

speak, one would believe that she had no use for Maoris. Yet when the cemetery had caught fire, she begged the Beauchamps to save it.

"But you have no interest in it, Armena," Cousin Ethel said in her gentle, solicitous way.

"Armena have seven husbands there," said the Maori.

Kass liked to talk to Armena while she ironed the children's pinafores. She ironed beautifully ; and especially she liked to iron men's shirts. When they asked her where she had learned, she said, "Down in the city." She had paid five pounds to learn. Her last husband had been an Englishman, and she was very proud of him. When he died he left her a bit of land which she treasured and called in Maori, "The Wedding Dowry." She was fond of "Maggie"—as she called Ethel, whose name she couldn't say—and she wanted to give her the title-deeds. But Cradock Beauchamp had the strictness of a prospector who never jumps his neighbour's claim. "You can't take it from them, Ethel," he said sternly. So she returned the deeds to Armena.

One morning Armena came crying down to Anikiwa. Her *whare* had burned, and the deeds with it.

"Now the dirty Maoris will get my bit of land," she cried in Maori, forgetting English in her despair. She had wanted it—the gift of a white man to her—to return to the whites. The land became valuable long afterwards—worth a fortune—when the Anikiwa homestead had to be sold for taxes.

3

One afternoon the three children had been catching "cocha-bullies" and "tiddlers" in a stream. They followed it through the paddocks, down the ravine, to the Anikiwa beaches. Kass wandered away by herself, dragging the leather doll Hinemoa. She was finding little tiny shells. There was something very special to her in these—so perfect, so small and delicate, and yet in every detail like the big ones. Her love for little tiny things—exquisite, minute flowers and shells—poised on the very lintel of a faërie world, scarcely to be known except through these, and very deeply, very secretly her own—was poignant all her life.

She knelt by small pools along the beach, and gave herself up to this silvery world. Flowers no bigger than a pin prick on those trees waving beneath the water. Tiny silvery toadstools. Another world-within-a-world. She raised herself up and looked about, for a moment, longing for Uncle Cradock's spectacles. But as she gazed down into that crystal country, she seemed to have become tiny, too—down beneath those flowery trees, beneath the silvery umbrella, to a world like the world within a drop of water.

After tea that evening she remembered Hinemoa. The leather doll was sitting in a tree by the ravine, half a mile away.

She began to cry. The grandmother called her sharply :

"Kass ! You're a silly little thing !"

"I know it's still hanging from a tree in the rain," she sobbed. Cousin Ethel tried to talk to her, but she wouldn't be consoled. She only cried and cried.

Finally the cousin heard the rain splash on the eaves. She called one of her brothers, a boy of about ten or twelve, and persuaded him to go down for the doll.

He came back from the half a mile in the wet, with a red face, dragging the leather doll by an arm. Though her cheeks were still stiff with the dried tears, Kass was sitting up by the fire.

4

When—like Fenella in *The Voyage*—Kass went to visit her grandparents at Picton—in the little square white house where they lived with her uncle Stanley, who wore a black velvet coat—she found a place quite different from Anikiwa, even though it was on the same Sound and only ten miles away. And Picton in the 'nineties was quite other than Picton in the 'sixties. Grass was growing in the narrow streets, and cows grazed in them, and strolled lazily among the shabby houses and old wooden shops. The lovely little seaport had gone to sleep for ever.

The "General Merchant Store," built for grandfather Beauchamp on Wellington Street, was only 150 yards or so from the boat jetties and wharf. From that water-front, Kathleen might have imagined herself on the shores of a lovely lake. In the sunlight it was blue and sparkling; but the town faces north, and sudden grey squalls rise quickly in the small harbour enclosed by the steep

bush-clad mountains that throw their arms about Picton. Then it is dark and terrifying, "like living at the bottom of a well." Towards evening the sense of being closed in, cut off from all the world, grows rapidly with the twilight. The western hill-side looks dark and threatening in its own shadow. To the child it was like a great crouching lion, as if the bulk of shadow gathered its dark force ready to spring. Yet if she looked north, where it falls into the sea, that was the lion's tail; and, since tails have a levity which make one laugh, the fantasy would pass.

“ I think the only way to live as a writer is to draw upon one’s real, familiar life—to find the treasure. . . . And the curious thing is that if we describe this which seems to us so intensely personal, other people take it to themselves and understand it as if it were their own.”—*K. M. (Letter to S. M., Cape Town.)*

I

KARORI is a secluded valley 800 feet above the sea, closed in by rugged hills covered by gorse. In the ’nineties, before the gorse had been planted for a thorn-hedge and had spread beyond control, these hills were still bush-covered. The very valley had once been a forest. Wakefield wrote in 1842 : “ The floor of the valley was a tract of the very finest *totare* timber.” But by that year the pioneers had already begun to clear and settle, finding their way in by an old Maori trail. Generations before the Maoris, who always chose the best locations for their *pahs*, had settled in Karori. By 1843, the road had crossed the steep part of Kaiwharawhara, and Karori was the first rural settlement connected with Lambton Harbour. The very name, “ Devious,” indicated the tortuous, difficult mountain road which wound for three and a half miles S.W. from Wellington.

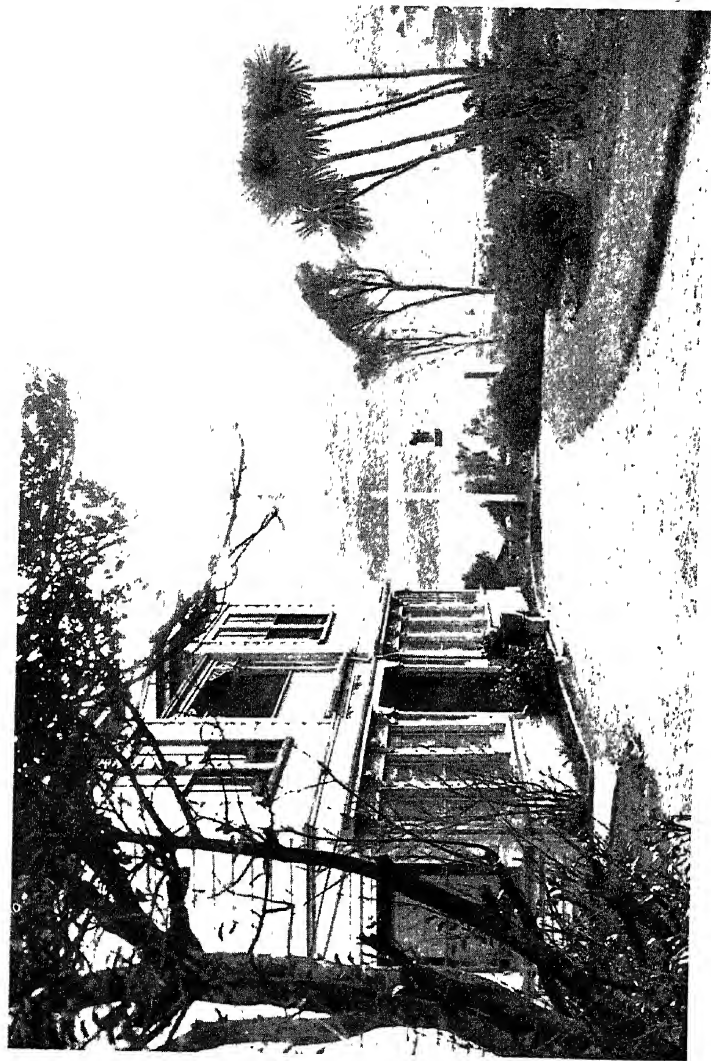
This was the road which the “store-man” followed on that windy night in 1893, when he

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

collected Kezia and Lottie from their old home at 11 Tinakori Road and delivered them at "Chesney Wold." The road began at Hawkstone Street, in Wellington; ran up Tinakori Road past the red fire-house to the Botanical Gardens, where it turned to the right (not the left as the newer tram-road does), around the horseshoe bend (where Lambton Harbour disappeared from view); to the "Shepherds' Arms"; across the Kaiwharawhara Valley and its broad stream; up the rocky gully, and down the hill where the wild bush nearly met on either side; to St. Mary's, the old Karori Church, and the white cemetery; on to the "Karori General Store"; then along the flat and out into the Karori valley.

There a little village of white houses clustered, almost like the ring of tombstones on the flat. The first settlers had gathered together around the house of Chief Justice Chapman, whose stockade would serve as refuge and rallying place. It never had been necessary to use this for safety, but it had drawn the early homesteads together.

The Beauchamps' home was beyond, on the further side of the valley, not far from the South Karori Road. There was only one other homestead near. Mr. Beauchamp had bought "Chesney Wold," a house built by Stephen Lancaster, an early pioneer. It was one of the first houses built in Karori—in the style of Colonel Wakefield's, with low, sloping roof (which had been raised before the Beauchamps' time), a broad verandah banked with periwinkle, and wide paddocks. The Karori stream wound below the house, down to the sea beyond the far



CHESNEY WOLD, KARORI

KARORI

hills at Tongue Point. There were orchards of damsons and old apple trees below the garden. It was an historic place and an old landmark ; the first church service in Karori had been held in this house in 1852.

It was most unusual, in the 'nineties, for a family to move out to Karori from Wellington, especially when the father had his business in town. Those who were children then still remember their delighted astonishment when the doll's house arrived on the dray with the Beauchamps' goods. Karori was an old settlement. Most of the residents had lived there for two generations.

The move to Karori meant that Mr. Beauchamp must be driven twice every day by the new gardener, Pat Sheehan, over the mountain road ; or he must walk the distance. It took an hour to walk down to the Government Buildings on Lambton Quay ; but the land would be valuable one day. And Karori—with its seclusion and its freedom, its fresh sea and mountain air—was a most healthful and desirable place in which small children could grow up.

2

Whether or not Karori had people who were "her people," it certainly had many "characters" of the kind which Katherine Mansfield was to understand and illuminate later in *The Aloe*, and *Prelude*, and *The Doll's House*.

About a mile up the Karori Road beyond "Chesney Wold" was "the monkey tree cottage" where Barry and Eric Waters, the two boy cousins,

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

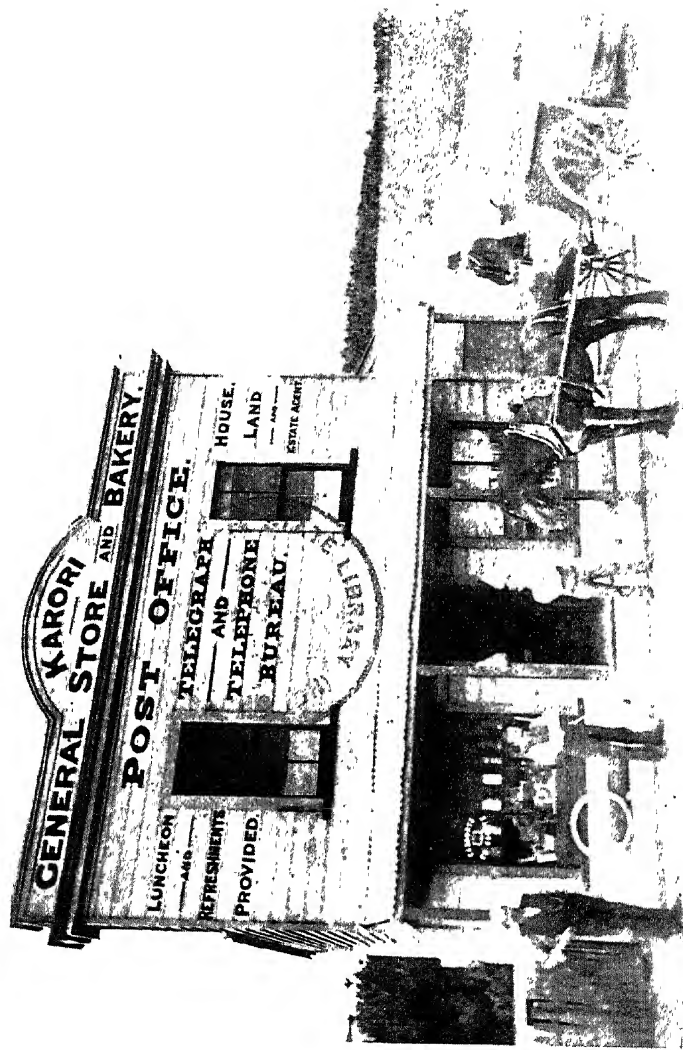
lived. Eric was a thin, almost effeminate child. "His shoulder blades stuck out like two little wings." But Barry, like his pioneer namesake, was "all boy"; and "Spot," the beautiful silky cocker spaniel, was his shadow.

Their father, Frederick Valentine Waters, was a man more at home in the child's world than in the world of adults. His wife, who had been a Dyer, an older sister of Kathleen's mother, was exactly as "Doady" was described: a beautiful, distinguished-looking woman with a patrician bearing, the heavy-lidded eyes and long, narrow face of the wife of Andrea del Sarto. Frederic Waters was drawn more out of line—more, as Katherine Mansfield thought later, like a Cezanne:

"One of his men gave me quite a shock. He's the spit of a man I've just written about, one Jonathan Trout. To the life. I wish I could cut him out and put him in my book."

The children's earliest recollection of their aunt was in a darkened room, lying on a sofa with crossed hands and a general air of resignation. The room was sweet with eau-de-Cologne from a handkerchief over her eyes, and their mother was saying: "You *poor* dear! You always have *such* headaches!"

Her husband was as different from her in temperament as he was in appearance. The house simply rang with his gaiety when he was at home; and it seemed an empty shell—without even an echo—in his absence. The story is told that his marriage to her was unexpected. She was to have married another man. She was even at the church, with bridesmaids, flowers, guests all assembled.



THE KARORI STORE (1893)

And the bridegroom didn't appear. Shortly afterward she was married to Frederick Waters.

He never had much respect for men. He was too chivalrous. When he saw soldiers walking with their arms about girls' waists, he was infuriated. "Men are always taking advantage of poor girls," he said. He forever took the girl's part and believed it was the man's fault. If a tram in the town went a minute or two early, he champed up and down: "Some poor old lady might have wanted to get on it"; or "some one might be sick and would be too late." He was a man of charm and kindness, yet he never got ahead. For years he was Assistant Secretary to the Post and Telegraphs, when he should have been head of a Government department. Opportunities came for him to advance; his charm advanced him, but his kindness held him back. There was always someone who, he thought, was entitled to promotion before him, or someone who, he thought, needed it more. So his real life was lived in his hobbies. He had two. One was music. He was baritone soloist with the Wellington Musical Union (under Mr. Parker); and organist at St. Mark's Church; and he led the choir at Karori. His other hobby was gardening—or perhaps it was his excuse for playing with the children—for his results were as varied and unexpected as his changes in appearance. He tied a handkerchief over his head, donned dungarees for his work, and was always wheeling something in a barrow; but the children never knew what face he would be wearing.

They flocked over, when they saw him in the

garden, all ready to ride in the barrow or on his back. The three little Beauchamp girls would drift in, dressed alike in galatea blouses, white or striped ; and blue smocked jumper dresses. They were very careful of those dresses ; they always wore them for a whole week, and yet they looked neat and fresh. Lena Monaghan's mother used to point out how clean the little Beauchamp girls were. Lena's dress lasted only two days. But Lena didn't know—her own mother didn't know—the “ terrible times ” that Kass had over hers ; and the conspiracies with the grandmother over clean pinafores and lost hair-bows. But all was forgotten at Uncle Fred's. If Vera, grown up and lady-like, hurried on, and Chaddie, gay and elfish, danced ahead, while Kass lagged behind crying, “ Wait for me ! ” Uncle Fred had some surprising transformation. She forgot to say, “ I can't go fast like the others ; I'm too fat ” ; for he could go fast or slow to suit the child. And he made the most astonishing changes in his hair ! Sometimes he had a little beard, sometimes a moustache, sometimes little sidewhiskers. Then when they had got used to the two of those, he would appear with only one. He was like the little beds in his garden : some were beautifully tended ; others were bristling with weeds. Great times the children had in the paddocks with him. Wherever he was there was a party. The house and the garden rang with fun. He loved to get up little theatricals for the children, and he seemed to have boundless delight and energy for everything. He would dress up for the parts, and his long thin legs seemed to be everywhere.

KARORI

When a ball was held at the Parochial Hall, they dressed in some of these costumes. Kass was "Mrs. Tom Thumb," with the grandmother's cap and an antimacassar apron over her neat long black dress. Marie was "Mr. Tom Thumb." She was allowed to wear the uncle's chain and tie, and he made a tremendous white walrus pioneer's moustache and glued it on for her.

Rose Ridler helped on these occasions. Rose was an orphan who had been taken by Mrs. Waters for a maid when she was eighteen ; and she had become not only a daughter, but a manager and staff and companion, all in one. She was a small dark person, with a quick dry wit. She and Mr. Waters always had a joke between them. In fact, they had a joke that ran like a serial with new chapters added from day to day. And Rose never forgot any of it. She adored him as the children adored him, and she followed him about at home as children collected after him when he went down the street. Every Karori child went to Rose with a cut finger, as they went to Mr. Waters for sympathy and fun.

Rose helped in the garden, too ; but in the house she not merely helped, she managed it all. Mrs. Waters could cook well ; she said she "could make soup with her eyes shut," and good soup it was, too. But Rose Ridler's gingerbread was Karori history. The children were allowed to scrape the dish and lick the spoon ; and they invariably wondered why—when it all was the same dough—the top tasted smooth and shiny and sweetish and like top ; and the underneath tasted like underneath—bity and saltish and rough.

On Sundays, Rose Ridler taught Sunday School at the Parochial Hall, at half past two in the afternoon. The little girls went in their Sunday pinafores. The Grandmother took them to church in the morning, and they sat in a stiffly starched row listening to Mr. Waters as he led the Karori Church Choir. If they went in the evening with their father, they had always to carry a lantern. There were only foot-paths and no street lights in Karori. At home they used big lamps of the same sort as the little lamp in the doll's house.

When the aunt lay in the darkened room, with her air of resignation—while Rose Ridler managed the house, and Mr. Waters charmed the children—had she a real premonition of tragedy, after all? Yet when it came, she met it valiantly. It seemed almost as though she had performed her suffering beforehand, while she had time for it.

In November, 1918, Vera came, on the *Niagara*, on a visit to Wellington. By some trick of fate, that ship brought the first of the post-war influenza to New Zealand. When word came that Vera was ill, Mr. Beauchamp and Mr. Waters got permission to go to her. A few days afterward both men were stricken with the disease. A week later Mr. Waters was dead.

3

What was remarkable about Pat Sheehan that he should for ever afterward stalk through the pages that told of Karori? To the grown-ups—nothing. Patrick Sheehan was the handy man whom Mr.

KARORI

Beauchamp had found to drive him to town with the phaeton and the grey mare ; to care for the pony, "General," which he thought "too dangerous for the children to ride" ; to work in the paddocks and orchards of "Chesney Wold." He was just an Irish immigrant to New Zealand—another of the floating ones.

To the children, his distinction was in his Irishness : his power through fun and fantasy to enter their world.

His Irishness appeared in his stories ; and the small girl, who long before had been companioned by "the shadow children thin and small," found familiar country here :

"On those late evenings he had wonderful stories to tell of a little old man no bigger than his thumb with a hat as high as the barb-wired fence, who in the night crept out of the creek, climbed up the blue gum-tree, picked some leaves from the topmost branches, and then crept down again. 'You see,' Pat would say . . . 'it's from blue gums that you got eucalyptus, and the old man suffered from cold, living in such dampness'."

When she was very small she was like another Katya in Tchekov's *A Tedious Story*, which—when she found it in later life—became part of herself :

"Her eyes invariably expressed the same thing : 'Everything that goes on in this world,—everything is beautiful and clever'."

Like another Katya, too, she was gradually to discover that thieves had been at the "bag full of rainbow hopes," which she thought to have hidden safely.

But Pat belonged to the time of rainbows, and all that he did was remarkable, and curious, and full of delight :

“ He used to hoist me up on the table and recount long tales of the Dukes of Ireland whom he had seen and even conversed with. We were most proud of our gardener having rubbed shoulders with Ireland’s aristocracy, and in the evening when Pat was at tea in the kitchen we would steal out and beg him to show us the manners of the people in Ireland. Standing in a row, hand in hand, we would watch while Pat put some salt on his knife, tapped it off with his fork, the little finger of his right hand well curled . . . the way in which the Dukes of Ireland balanced salt upon their knives.”

Pat had the power to enter not only the children’s world, but the world of Kezia, which was another country entirely :

“ I played a game which had no end and no beginning, but was called ‘ Beyond the Blue Mountains.’ The scene was generally placed near the rhubarb beds, and Pat officiated as the villain, the hero, and even the villainess, with unfailing charm.”

Already this little girl had begun to know loneliness. She was surrounded by three sisters and a small brother ; by a father, mother, grandmother, aunt. She lived in a busy, healthy household, among happy people. Yet it was not enough. She was of the lonely ones who must discover (at a heavy price) that so few—so far between—are “ her people.” She was of the unique ones who must create their own world :

“ I thought of the time when I was quite a child ”
(she wrote in her first year at College), “ and lived in

KARORI

the great old rambling house that has long since been removed and its place taken by other houses more useful but far less dear. The old house had an extraordinary fascination for me. I always thought of it as a species of ogre who controlled all our garden and our meadows and our woods.

“ ‘May I go and play in the hayfield to-day?’ I used to say, and gaze up timidly at its stern, unblinking face, and it never failed to give me an answer. The great thing about it that puzzled me was that it never closed its eyes. . . .

“Down at the bottom of our garden ran a little stream, and here I spent many happy hours. With my shoes and socks off, and my frock tucked high all around me, I used to wade, and attempt to catch certain very tiny fish that swam and played in its depths—or rather, its shallow places. If I did catch one, I always put it into a glass jar and carried it home to keep till it should grow into a whale. Alas, it never did grow, though it was not for lack of care and attention.

“During my childhood, I lived surrounded by a luxurious quantity of flowers, and they were my only companions. . . . How I loved my life. My greatest delight was to find fresh flowers to love, and my greatest sorrow was if they should die. I remember the year the spring was late in coming. I had stolen out into the garden in the dead of night to cover by a blanket a snowdrop that had flowered the day before.

“In the summer when the trees in our wood were in full leaf, and the bracken was high and dainty and green, I used to linger for hours. One day, how well I remember it, I brought with me a tall lily I had found lying across the garden path, and I began to talk to it in a low, dreamy voice. Suddenly I paused. Someone was coming toward me, singing a strange little French song. It was a woman dressed all in a white, soft gown open at the throat, and long, loose-hanging sleeves. In her hands she held roses—red, red roses. I was so hidden in my little bracken nest

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

that she could not see me. My heart beat fast and I felt the colour rush to my face. I had dreamed of her—no ordinary, living woman, but a fairy, or a Goddess of the Wood. Nearer and nearer she came, with her head held high, and a strange, sweet light in her eyes. Then I stretched out my arm and plucked at her sleeve. She looked down at me, startled. ‘Only a little child,’ she said. ‘Is this your wood? Why are you here all alone?’ But I hid my face in her dress and sobbed. In a minute she was down beside me. She took me on her lap and pushed my thick, heavy hair back from my hot face, and kissed me, and begged me to tell her what was the matter. ‘Nothing, nothing,’ I sobbed, ‘but they don’t understand me at home.’ . . . ”

To the family she was “the difficult child,” and “hard to understand.” When her father saw the plump little figure sitting hunched over, idly dreaming, wastefully doing nothing, he called to her sharply: “Sit up straight, Kass! You’ll never grow that way!”

And as she grew older she rebelled outright, at times, and *became* the outlaw:

“She stood at the scullery door and called, ‘Pat, Pat.’ The sun streamed over the courtyard. The pincushion flowers stood limply and thirstily against the wall of the feedroom. . . .

“ . . . ‘Pat, make it all right with the family if they kick up a shindy. I am so dead sick of them all—I must go off.’ She laid her hand caressingly against the arm of his old blue shirt. ‘Done, Miss,’ said Pat. And he stood in the paddock and watched her mount and ride out of sight. Riding was as natural as walking to her. She held herself very loosely and far back from the waist like a native riding—and fear had never entered into her thoughts.

“ ‘I like riding down this road with the sun hurting

KARORI

me,' she mused. ' I love everything that really comes fiercely—It makes me feel so fighting, and that's what I like.

" ' I wish I hadn't quarrelled with Father and Mother again. That's a distinct bore—especially since it's only a week to my birthday '."

The family doubtless had no idea of the quick perception of this fat little girl who could be jolly and play with the other children in the usual fashion. In fact, those who were grown-ups then—teachers, aunts, friends—say that Kass Beauchamp was " the last child in the world they ever expected to become a writer." To them, she was " careless," " lazy," " impatient," " indifferent," " dull," " slow and fat." They felt she needed prodding to quicken her perception and to make her more alert, and sweeter—" like her sisters." That she should be hypersensitive enough to remember for years a chance look between the grown-ups—passed over her head—would certainly have seemed to them incredible. As it would have seemed had they been told she bore it hard that her sisters seemed preferred before her, since everyone responded to their soft sweetness.

There were occasions such as this :

" On the way home from school " (after Kass had won the green-plush-bracket-and-frog " poetry prize," and had given it up to Chaddie, instead—because Chaddie never won anything) " we passed the Karori bus going home from town full of business men. The driver gave us a lift, and we bundled in. We knew all the people.

" ' I've won a prize for po'try ! ' cried Mary in a high, excited voice.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

“ ‘ Good old Mary ! ’ they chorused.

“ Again she was the centre of admiring popularity.

“ ‘ Well, Kass, you needn’t look so doleful,’ said Mr. England, laughing at me ; ‘ you aren’t clever enough to win everything.’

“ ‘ I know,’ I answered, wishing I were dead and buried. I did not go into the house when we reached home, but wandered down to the loft and watched Pat mixing the chicken food.

“ But the bell rang at last, and with slow steps I crept up to the nursery.

“ Mother and grandmother were there with two callers. Alice had come up from the kitchen ; Vera was sitting with her arm around Mary’s neck.

“ ‘ Well, that’s wonderful, Mary,’ Mother was saying, ‘ such a lovely prize, too. Now you see what you really can do, darling.’

“ ‘ That will be nice for you to show your little girls when you grow up,’ said grandmother.

“ Slowly I slipped into my chair.

“ ‘ Well, Kass, you don’t look very pleased,’ cried one of the tactful callers.

“ Mother looked at me severely.

“ ‘ Don’t say you are going to be a sulky child about your sister,’ she said.

“ Even Mary’s bright, little face clouded.

“ ‘ You are glad, aren’t you, dear ? ’ she questioned.

“ ‘ I’m frightfully glad,’ I said, holding on to the handle of my mug (‘ A silver mug—the handle of mine being silver, was always red hot, so that I had to lap up what was inside, like a kitten ! ’), and seeing all too plainly the glance of understanding that passed between the grownups. . . . Mary’s bed was in the opposite corner of the room. I lay with my head pressed into the pillow. Then the tears came. I pulled the clothes over my head. The sacrifice was too great. I stuffed a corner of the sheet into my mouth to keep me from shouting out the truth.

KARORI

Nobody loved me, nobody understood me, and they loved Mary without the frog, and now that she had it I decided that they loved me less. . . . ”

Yet it would be as inexact to say she always felt left out of the family, as it would be to say she felt completely one of them. But, apart from her temperament, the very time of her birth made her “the odd one” : Vera and Marie, being the oldest and more alike, paired off ; the two babies played together. This inevitable division among the children certainly accentuated Kathleen’s natural consciousness of isolation and aloofness. In a New Zealand family, “the oldest” has great preference. The third child is of comparatively little importance—except while she is “the baby.” There had been a new baby when Kathleen was four and a half ; and soon after the family moved to Karori, the long-hoped-for “Boy” was born.

Leslie Heron Beauchamp was not merely the only boy ; he was an adorable, laughing, fair-and-curly-haired baby, besides. When he was christened at the Karori Church, he was given the best names the family could provide. He was named Leslie after C. R. Leslie, who had painted great-grandmother Stone, and Heron after great-uncle Henry Herron Beauchamp of Australia (the father of his second cousin Elizabeth). It was only after the baptism that his father discovered a mistake made in the spelling of one name : the “Boy” had been christened Leslie *Heron*.

He and Vera were the chosen children of the five in the subtle ways of living. But in the ordinary sense—in the visible ways—they all played together

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

and had a great deal of fun, as on the day of the great Appollinaris adventure :

“ ‘ Now let’s go and play shipwrecks,’ suggested Beggles. There’s a huge Appollinaris case in the back yard. We’ll drag it round to the Dead Sea.’ ”

“ They found the case in the coal house, and pushed and pulled and groaned till they reached . . . a strip of waste ground where docks and long straggling grass grew in profusion.

“ ‘ Now for provision,’ said Jinks (who was Kass) climbing through the pantry window. . . . They slipped everything into Lul’s sunbonnet. . . .

“ A few minutes later, three Englishmen, armed to the teeth, were seen stealing round the Jungle. They seemed to be rather inconvenienced by numerous oceans, which they swam with great exertion and puffing. . . .

“ ‘ One man wounded,’ said Beggles, with great satisfaction, viewing Jinks’ knee. . . .

“ She sat in the bottom of the boat and Beggles doctored her. First he laid on the cool leaf, which they believed was used by the ancient Britons for medical purposes, and then tightly bound round the handkerchief. The rest of the morning they cruised around Fiji, had a look at Queen Victoria, an unimportant fight off the coast of China, and arrived home in time for lunch.”

Or they played “ ladies and gentlemen,” which involved being “ married in a daisy chain with the wedding service read from a seed catalogue.” Or they made mud-pies. Katherine’s recollection of this heavenly occupation—its peculiar terrors and unique delights—was vivid.

“ In the days of our childhood we lived in a great old rambling house planted lonesomely in the midst of huge gardens, orchards and paddocks. We had few



VERA, MARIE (as TOM THUMB), KATHLEEN (as MRS TOM THUMB), JEANNE

KARORI

toys, but—far better—plenty of good strong mud and a flight of concrete steps that grew hot in the heat of the sun and became dreams of ovens.

“The feeling of making a mud pie with all due seriousness, is one of the most delicious feelings that we experience ; you sit with your mixture in the doll’s saucepan, or if it is soup, in the doll’s wash-hand basin, and stir and stir, and thicken and ‘ whip,’ and become more deliciously grimy each minute ; whilst the sense of utter wickedness you have if it happens to be on clean pinafore days thrills me to this hour.

“Well I remember one occasion when we made pies with real flour, stole some water from the dish by the dog’s kennel, baked them and ate them.

“Very soon after three crushed, subdued little girls wended their way quietly up to bed, and the blind was pulled down.”

Or they played ladies and gentlemen and mud-pies all at once, as in the great game in *Prelude* where Kezia, as the servant, beat up a beautiful chocolate custard with half a broken clothes-peg.

Selected children from the Primary School—selected neighbour children—were allowed over to play with them ; and then they had great parties in the garden, while the tall pines in front of “ Chesney Wold ” threw a cool shadow across the road. In the afternoon the children stayed to a “ proper tea ” in the nursery, with the Grandmother presiding. Afterward, they went to the drawing-room “ all cleaned up,” and sang. Chaddie was close to the piano. Kass hung back. The mother played for them when they were quite small. Later, Vera accompanied.

But the best times, those which afterward became

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

part of her "possession," were the hours spent in the garden with Pat.

"Sometimes to make it more real, we had lunch together, sitting on the wheel-barrow turned down and sharing the slice of German sausage and a bath bun with sugar loaf on it."

Long afterward, when life had become for her something quite other, how she turned back to the companionship of those warm, sun-filled days in the back garden of "Chesney Wold"! Pat was associated in her mind with all that was glowing and warm and paradisaical. Of her garden of Eden, he was the gardener.

"Sparrows outside are cheeping like chickens. Oh heavens! What a different scene the sound recalls! The warm sun, the tiny yellow balls, so dainty, treading down the grass blades, and Sheehan giving me the smallest chick, wrapped in a flannel to carry to the kitchen fire."

and

"I am all for feathery-topped carrots—don't you love pulling up carrots, shaking them clean and tossing them on a heap! And feeling the cauliflowers to see which one is ready to cut. Then OUT comes your knife. When I was about the height of a garden spade I spent weeks—months—watching a man do all these things and wandering through canes of yellow butter beans and smelling the spotted broad bean flowers and helping to plant Giant Edwards and White Elephants."

By then she had forgotten the flaw, if flaw there was at the time :

"Pat was never very fond of me. I am afraid he did not think my character at all desirable. I pro-

KARORI

fessed no joy in having a bird in a cage ; and one day committed the unpardonable offence of picking a pumpkin flower. He never recovered from the shock occasioned by that last act of barbarism. I can see him now, whenever I came near, nodding his head and saying, ' Well, now to think. It might have become the finest vegetable of the season, and given us food for weeks '."

She remembered only what Pat really " meant " : understanding of the child's world, with the power to enter it himself.

He vanished from their world as unexpectedly as he had come :

" When we left that house in the country and went to live in town, Pat left us to try his luck in the gold-fields. We parted with bitter tears. He presented each of my sisters with a goldfinch, and me with a pair of white china vases cheerfully embroidered with forget-me-nots and pink roses. His parting advice to us was to look after ourselves in this world and never to pick the flowers out of the vegetable garden because we liked the colour."

4

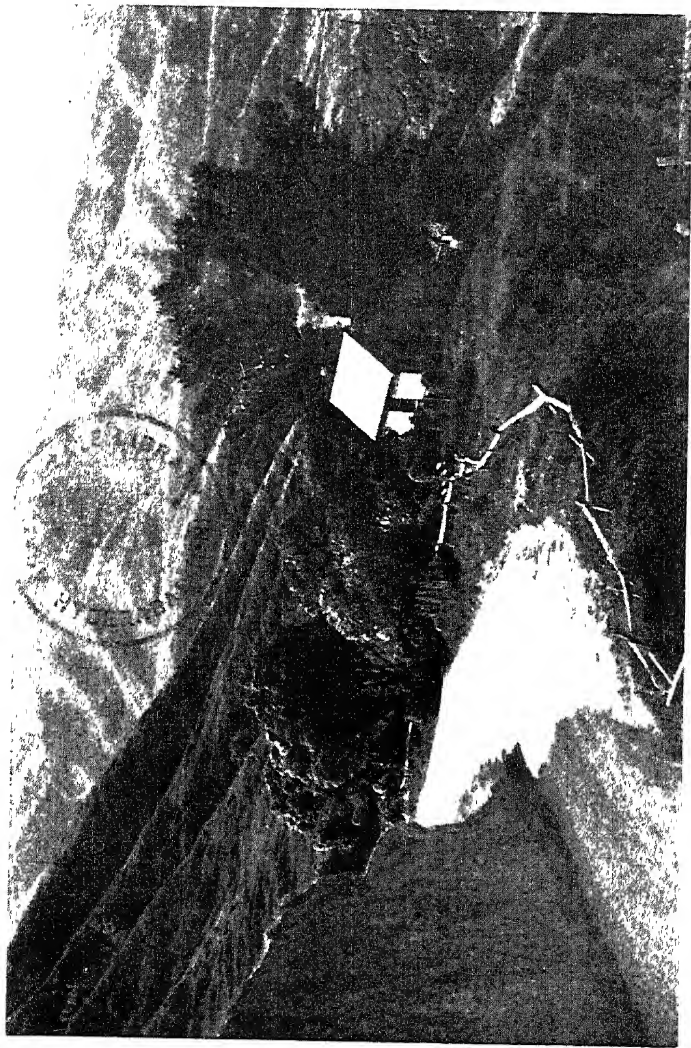
The five MacKelvies were well-known " characters " in Karori in the 'nineties. Mrs. MacKelvie, a stout neat little Cockney with " an Australian voice," was the village washerwoman. She was amusing, and a great talker. Everyone hired her ; she knew everything and everyone, and talked to all alike. One of the reasons she was given such free range was that she was either too witty or too wise to gossip indiscriminately. She told a good story

and people were always repeating her philosophic comments on life.

On the day that Mrs. MacKelvie came to wash, the mistress of the house was likely to drift down to the wash-house to listen, while the fat red arms splashed in and out of the foaming tubs, and the Australian voice rose and fell.

She told Mrs. Waters that Zoe, the second eldest, should have been *her* child. No one knew why. Zoe was apparently rather feeble—not quite bad enough to be exactly “mental.” But Mrs. MacKelvie thought her wonderful. She looked like her mother, with her great wad of crinkled black hair; yet she was untidy and had a silly smile. Lil, the eldest, was the only normal one; she married, later, and had seven children; but she apparently was too normal to interest her mother. “Our Else,” the artistic one, was the mother’s favourite. She called her “The Heavenly Child.” They all looked after her. Else used to paint on glass, and Mrs. MacKelvie gave the results about to the people she worked for. This pathetic “little wishbone of a child” cared for only the one thing: she loved to paint. Later, someone taught her to do chromos, and she made huge, unearthly castles, tottering on the brink of dark precipices. Could the child have *made up* these strange things? Yet they were well drawn. She had undoubted talent of some kind. Framed in ornate gold, they hung on the MacKelvie’s parlour walls; and Mrs. MacKelvie said: “What I ’aven’t room for on the wall, I ’ang under the bed.”

The grown-ups even used to call at the neat little shack, as they came back from the South Karori



KARORI HILLS---HOME OF THE MACKELVIES

Road, after visiting the "Bird Man" with the children, or from a picnic. Some one of them surprised the MacKelvies one day when the extras were "hung" not only under the bed, but all over the parlour. The mantelpiece had fallen in the night, and the chairs were loaded with gilded willow twigs ; with wax sprays ; with velvet stuffed hearts ; with china knick-knacks. A tortoise-shell cat leaped madly through the willows and showered painted glass, and water, and last year's catkins. But Mrs. MacKelvie dusted the cleared chair with her apron. Her Australian voice rolled on, unperturbed and hospitable :

"Mum, Our Lord lived in a stable ; didn't He ? I met Dad on the wharf on Saturday, and married him on Monday, and we lived in a tent. Lil, clear the combustable off that table. Let 'er 'ave 'er tea."

"Dad" MacKelvie was a little dried man, a "proper" gardener. He trailed in the wake of his wife to work in the gardens while she washed ; and if she intrigued the grown-ups, Mr. MacKelvie filled the children with astonishment and admiration.

He had a bushy whiskered face like a cinema close-up—contorting, registering surprise, chagrin, wonder, delight. As he leaned on his hoe over the weeds and rolled his eyes for the children, he made the most extraordinary sounds. When he sneezed, when he cleared his throat, the children stood petrified into dolls by delicious horror and surprise. How such a loud sound could come from such a small man ! And his thunderish voice was made to carry against the Wellington wind.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

"I tried to marry once before," he roared at the children.

"Why didn't you, Mr. MacKelvie?"

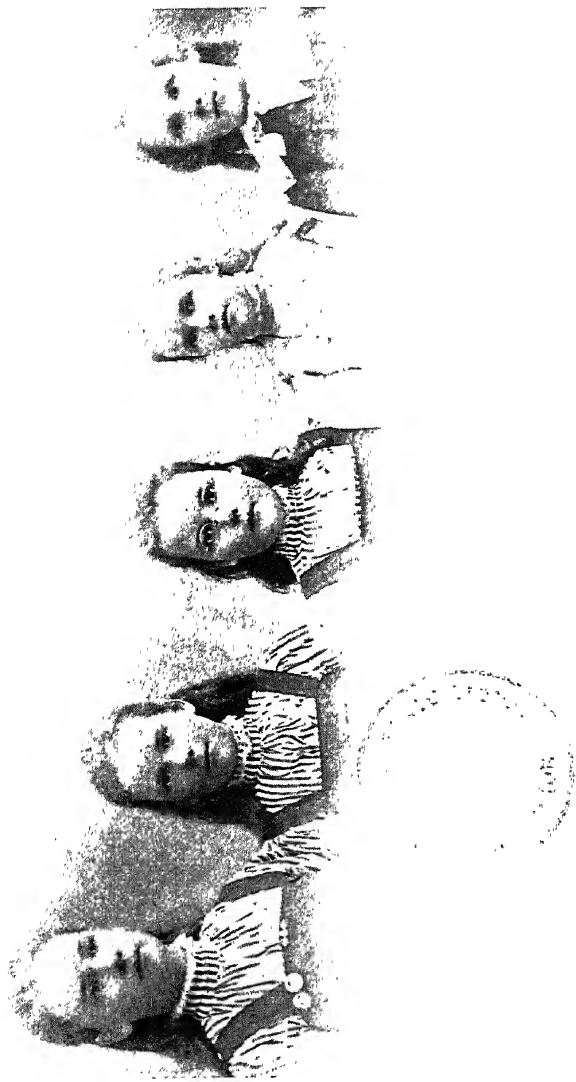
"She said 'no,' not 'yes.'"

Finally he went blind, and Mrs. MacKelvie had him put into the "Home for *In-curables*," as she called it. There she spent all her time when she wasn't washing. Once, one of the Karori children, who by then was a grown-up herself, was walking through the Home, when she heard the familiar "Australian voice":

"Isn't that Miss Edy? Come see 'im, Miss Edy. Mr. MacKelvie'll be wantin' to see you. Our Else is married, but 'e seemed a bit soft in the 'ead. I didn't think as she could get on alone, so I sent Zoe, too; an' you might sy as 'e married the *both* of 'em. But 'e got so bad we sent 'im to Porirua [the asylum]. Now you've got something to go 'ome an' tell the family!"

5

In 1893 Kathleen Beauchamp entered the first standard of the Karori Primary School. It was then a rough frame building of three rooms, surrounded by pines, about a mile up the road from "Chesney Wold"—an easy walk for the children in the fine weather; in the bad, Pat drove them to school in the cart. The school building stood back from the road on a slight rise above a gully where the children played, and in the dinner hour ate "their thick mutton sandwiches and big slabs of johnny cake spread with butter." All the Karori children



AT THE KARORI SCHOOL, 1898
VERA, CHARLOTTE MARY, KATHLEEN, JEANNE, LESLIE

KARORI

—boys and girls—went to the Karori School except a few who lived near the South Karori Road. The playground for the little boys was marked off by “tarred palings” from the playground for the little girls; and this was the only evident division among them.

Kathleen shared a seat with Lena Monaghan. The rows were tiered, built up on flat, wide steps; and the seats were made for two. Kass was plump and liked to sit in her own special way: with her knees tight together, both feet on the floor, and her elbows hugging her sides. Lena was a thin little thing with sharp, protruding bones. She was perky, like a bird, quick and sudden in movement and in speech—a nervous trigger type with an air assuming that all she might say was right. Her sudden movements sometimes brought her sharp little bones into Kass’s soft thighs. Lena felt that Kass was “too fat and took more than half the seat.” This may have been the basis of a memory which became somewhat symbolic:

“To me it’s just as though I’d been going home from school and the Monaghans had called after me, and you—about the size of a sixpence—had defended me and p’raps helped me to pick up my pencils and put them back in the pencil box. (I’d have given you the red one.)”

And one day around the memory of it all Katherine Mansfield’s experience was to crystallise. The moment came when she wrote in 1916:

“I begin to think of an unfinished memory which has been with me for years. It is a very good story if only I can tell it right, and it is called ‘Lena’.”

But what subtle changes the memory had still to undergo before it was created into *The Doll's House* are beyond discovery, and probably even beyond Katherine's own knowledge.

The little MacKelvies did not enter the Karori Primary School until a year after Kathleen. At the end of 1895 the South Karori School, which they had previously attended, was closed, and they began the daily trail to school and back past the gates of "Chesney Wold," of which *The Doll's House* is the enduring record.

With the Beauchamps and the Monaghans and the MacKelvies were the Waters boys : Eric, timid and sensitive, who had inherited his father's love of music, Barry, the dashing and original, who after an adventurous career in Australia and Africa, returned to New Zealand to die of tuberculosis. He was Pip of *Prelude*. He it was at the Karori School who burned holes in the frames of the slates for the sponge-string.

"Did you ever burn a hole in the frame? It was Barry Waters' speciality, with his initials burnt, too—and a trimming."

"And a trimming." It was what Shakespeare meant by "the flourish set on youth," which Time transfixes. There was a touch of the flamboyant in Barry which endeared him in especial to Kathleen's memory.

She now learned to read and to write on a slate and entered her second enchanted world. She took books to bed with her at night and read until the Grandmother had to carry away the candle left to keep off her "old bogey the dark" and the animals

that she dreamed rushed at her "while their heads swelled e-normous." She put the book under her pillow and waited for the light to come again. Finally, she read herself into headaches and had to wear little steel-rimmed spectacles which made her dark, searching gaze even more disconcerting than before. The grown-ups felt she was reading their minds when they used Maori words or ambiguous phrases and parts of quotations over the children's heads. The other children were fascinated by the rather owlish appearance of the plump, dark little girl with her serious, intent look, and her penetrating brown eyes framed in little silver frames. She herself was proud of the distinction.

She was eight years old when she won the school composition prize for a composition on "A Sea Voyage." Was it, one wonders, a sea voyage of her own—the first form of her enchanted description of a voyage across the Strait to Picton? Or was it an imaginative report of the traveller's tale of her father and mother. They had but lately returned from one of their journeys home, and the mother had brought back for Kass a magic glass to spy upon the wonders of the world.

"When mother came back from Switzerland in 1894, she brought me a tie-pin made like a violet, and one shut one's eye and looked through it at the Lion of Lucerne!"

Kathleen liked the Karori School; but there was one mistress, a young and extremely pretty woman, who had a disconcerting way of hurling her commands: "Slates—one, two, three!" Kass was likely to be dreaming, and she jumped as the

slates clattered from the backs of desks. But she turned hers quickly too. The penalty for missing three sums out of five, or for misspelling many words (and spelling was Kathleen's secret weakness) was the Dunce's Cap. She managed to avoid it. She was quick in arithmetic ; to the end of her life she could do "*marvellous accounts*—you know, pages and pages where everything is reduced and then turned back again." While for the spelling, she devised a method.

A new girl had come into the form—a girl named Turner. The teacher said coldly : " Sit by Kass Beauchamp, please ! " After one quick look at her, Kathleen moved to the extreme end of the seat and was silent. But she observed that the new girl could spell—also that she couldn't add. Though she had the whole seat to herself while Turner stood on the floor wearing a yellow paper cap with red letters : DUNCE, she easily visualised their positions reversed after a spelling class.

The next time that Turner glared helplessly at her slate, Kathleen nudged her. The teacher was looking. " What are you staring at, child ? " she said sharply.

" I can't do all the sums."

" Are you getting on all right, Kass-y ? "

Kathleen stood up : " Yes, thank you, but this new girl doesn't know all the rules. If you don't mind, I shall show her."

The teacher only turned away to explain the class problem ; so under cover of the instruction, Kass pushed her slate across the desk. On it she had written : " What sums can't you do ? "

KARORI

Speaking in school meant staying in, so Turner wrote the numbers. Kass did them and passed over the slate. Then when spelling hour came, Turner wrote out the spelling words for her.

One of the little boys was in danger of the Cap on a charge that seemed unfair. Kass raised her hand : " Please, he didn't hear the question ! " Then she sat and stared at the Mistress who was sounding her *a*'s and *r*'s in a manner so affected for Karori. She sponged the sums off her slate, and wrote out a poem to show to Rose Ridler, when she stopped at the Waters' for a piece of gingerbread on the way home from school :

" Old Mother Lockett is full of conceit :
She struts about on her pigeon-toed feet.
Old Mother Lockett by this time must know
If conceit were consumption
She'd be dead long ago.—KASS."

Rose was so delighted with the verse that she never forgot it.

The American elocution teacher had a special distinction : she had a husband who was said to be an author. Kass loved her because she loved to recite poetry. There was some strain in her of The True Original Pa Man who had stood on an upturned box, quoting Byron for an hour and a half. When she was small, this was more an instinct and an emotion than a developed talent ; but as she looked back at her own ardour and delight in it, it seemed to her that she must have been really moving :

" Jinny Moore was awfully good at elocution. Was she better than I ? I could make the girls cry when I

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

read Dickens in the sewing class, and she couldn't. But then she never tried to."

This was later in the Third Standard ; but even those girls didn't remember her reciting, though they always remembered her epigrammatic turn of phrase, and things that she wrote.

She had a beautifully pitched voice, as she grew older ; and she spoke exquisitely. At home she had learned sweetness of tone from the mother and the grandmother ; and " Gran Dear " had taught her a certain fastidiousness of phrase. Here she was learning precision of speech, and clearness of enunciation. The children were not to say " How-doyoudo," all run into one ; but " How do you do ? " each word clear and distinct.

Lena Monaghan practised it on Mr. and Mrs. Beauchamp the next time she saw them riding in their phaeton. Very distinctly and clearly : " How do you do ? "

The following day at playtime, Kass told her the result : " Last night at tea, Mother said : ' I saw Lena to-day, and she said, " How do you do ? " to me.' But Father said : ' No, she said it to me.' "

It was only a sympathetic and understanding mistress who took Kathleen out of herself, in those days, but this one understood her :

" I saw Teacher's face smiling at me, suddenly—the cold, shivering feeling came over me—and then I saw the little house and ' the little window where the sun came peeping in at morn '."

and

KARORI

"To stand before all those girls and Teacher, knowing my piece, loving it so much that I went in the knees and shivered all over, was joy."

"On poetry afternoons grandmother let Mary and me wear Mrs. Gardener's white hemstitched pinafores because we had nothing to do with ink or pencil. Triumphant and feeling unspeakably beautiful, we would fly along the road, swinging our kits and half chanting, half singing our new piece. I always knew my poetry, but Mary, who was a year and a half older, never knew hers. In fact, lessons of any sort worried her soul and body. She never could distinguish between 'm' and 'n.' . . .

"I was a strong, fat little child who burst my buttons and shot out of my skirts to grandmother's entire satisfaction, but Mary was a 'weed.' She had a continuous little cough.

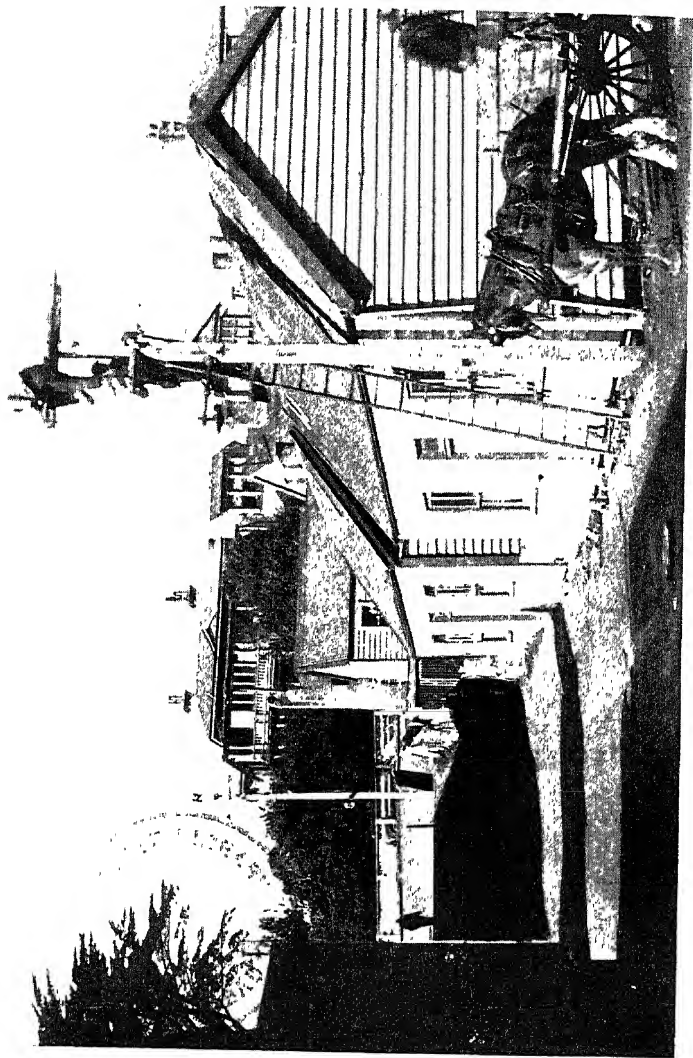
"'Poor old Mary's bark,' as father called it. . . .

"'I can't bear lessons,' she would say woefully. 'I'm all tired in my elbows and my feet.' And yet, when she was well she was elfishly gay and bright—danced like a fairy and sang alike a bird. And heroic! She would hold a rooster by the legs while Pat chopped his head off. She loved boys, and played with a fine sense of honour and purity. In fact, I think she loved everybody; and I, who did not, worshipped her. I suffered untold agonies when the girls laughed at her in class, and when she answered wrongly I put up my hand and cried 'Please teacher she means something quite different.' . . . But on poetry afternoons I could not help at all. . . ."

Learning poetry by heart was to remain a passion with Katherine—a solace in some of her bitterest and loneliest hours. If this story is autobiographical—and doubtless it is—it must have cost her no small sacrifice to surrender to Chaddie the prize—"the green plush bracket with a yellow frog stuck on it"

—which she had won by reciting Tom Hood's "I remember, I remember" without a mistake. And, at least once again in her life, a frog was the precious thing surrendered: when she gave J. D. Fergusson her little brass "paddock" for a token that she acknowledged him (as she always did) as one of "her people." For some reason such little figures were dear to her. At one time she possessed two charming little lizards of weathered bronze which lived (or appeared to live) in a shallow bowl of water on the floor before the fire. Probably, they also were given away as tokens.

Her most "secret" possession of the days at Karori School was never brought to the light of day in any of her stories. It was the memory of Tim Logan, her first sweetheart. They used to walk home together from school, in the ditch beside the road, hidden under the pine boughs holding hands.



75 TINAKORI ROAD, WELLINGTON

“Life never becomes a habit to me. It’s always a marvel.”—*K. M. (Letters.)*

I

WHEN Kathleen was nine and a half, Mr. Beauchamp moved the family back to town to No. 75 Tinakori Road, several squares further up the hill toward the Botanical Gardens. Again this was a home more quickly welcomed by the children than by the adults :

“Our house in Tinakori Road stood far back from the road. It was a big, white-painted square house with a slender pillared verandah and balcony running all the way round it. In the front from the verandah edge the garden sloped away in terraces and flights of concrete steps—down—until you reached the stone wall covered with nasturtium that had three gates let into it—the visitors’ gate, the tradesman’s gate, and a huge pair of old iron gates that were never used and clashed and clamoured when Bogey and I tried to swing on them.

“Tinakori Road was not fashionable ; it was very mixed. Of course there were some good houses in it, old ones, like ours for instance, hidden away in wildish gardens, and there was no doubt that land there would become extremely valuable, as Father said, if one bought enough and hung on.

“It was high, it was healthy ; the sun poured in all the windows all day long, and once we had a decent tramway service, as Father argued. . . .

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

“ But it was a little trying to have one’s own washer-woman living next door who would persist in attempting to talk to Mother over the fence, and then, just beyond her ‘hovel,’ as Mother called it, there lived an old man who burned leather in his back yard whenever the wind blew our way. And further along there lived an endless family of half-castes who appeared to have planted their garden with empty jam tins and old saucepans and black iron kettles without lids. And then just opposite our house there was a paling fence and below the paling fence in a hollow, squeezed in almost under the fold of a huge gorse-covered hill, was Saunders’ Lane.”

The children were strictly forbidden to venture into that narrow and mysterious lane where women with shawls over their heads slipped furtively. Its grubbiness as Little George Street, afterward, was nothing to what it had been as Saunders’ Lane.

The new house faced it . . . almost looked down upon it, in fact, but they could learn to pretend it was not there. They could look across, at the Tinakori Hills.

The girls had a room so high up it was like being on a ship ; and they might see the Harbour again as they used to, at No. 11, when they were very small. Kathleen loved hanging out of this window, like a bird from a branch, at those secret hours which open a new world : late at night, when the city enclosing the Harbour was a city of stars, and the Southern Cross dipped low in the sky. The coal hulks far beyond Pipeta Point were indistinct shapes, each with one green and one red light ; and the tiny ships “ all hung with bright beads ” put out across the Harbour toward the South Island.

And early, early :

“ Four o'clock. Is it light now at four o'clock ? I jump out of the bed and run over to the window. It is half-light, neither black nor blue. The wing of the coast is violet ; in the lilac sky are black banners and little black boats manned by black shadows put out on the purple water.

“ Oh ! how often I have watched this hour when I was a girl ! But then—I stayed at the window until I grew cold—until I was icy—thrilled by something—I did not know what.”

Below in the garden—beneath the tennis courts (where they had tournaments some days), beneath the lily lawn, was the violet bed and the old pear-tree :

“ “ Do you remember the enormous number of pears that used to be on that old tree ? ” . . .

“ “ And how after there's been a Southerly Buster we used to go out with clothes baskets to pick them up ? ”

“ “ And how while we stooped they went on falling, bouncing on our backs and heads ? ”

“ “ And how far they used to be scattered, ever so far, under the violet leaves, down the steps, right down to the lily-lawn ? We used to find them trodden in the grass. And how soon the ants got to them. I can see now that little round hole with a sort of fringe of brown pepper round it.” . . .

“ “ They were so bright, canary yellow—and small. And the peel was so thin and the pips jet—jet black. First you pulled out the little stem and sucked it. It was faintly sour, and then you ate them always from the top—core and all ? ” . . .

“ “ Do you remember sitting on the pink garden seat ? ”

“ “ It always wobbled a bit and there were usually the marks of a snail on it.”

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

“ ‘Sitting on that seat, swinging our legs and eating the pears’ .”

Perhaps it had as much magic for her as any “wildish garden” which Kathleen Beauchamp—or Katherine Mansfield—ever knew.

There was the mother, walking about, pointing to some stem, some branch of blossom: “Look, dear! Isn’t that lovely! See! how lovely!” Flowers seemed to have more reality to her than anything outside her own family. As soon as she entered the big gates below the flight of concrete stairs, she would call: “Children! Children!” And in the evenings, as they played about the garden, she was on her husband’s arm:

“The stillness, the lightness, the steps on the gravel—the dark trees, the flowers, the night-scented stocks—what happiness it was to walk with him there. What he said did not really matter so very much. But she felt she had to be herself in a way that no other occasion granted her. She felt *his ease* and although he never looked at what she pointed out to him it did not matter. His ‘Very nice, dear!’ was enough. He was always planning, always staring towards a future. ‘I should like later on.’ But she—she did not in the least; the present was all she loved and dwelt in.”

Her life revolved inside the palings of her home, illuminated by the flowers in her garden, which overflowed into her house. Was it from her that the girls got this way of noticing some flower, some twig—even with unappreciative people? They all did it. They all noticed them in this way. Kathleen Beauchamp, as she grew up, was for ever pointing out something: “Look! How lovely!” It was

not—as many people afterward thought—because New Zealand abounded in strange and gorgeous bloom. In fact, New Zealand has few, few wild flowers, and those few are small and white :

“ Oh, how I love flowers ! People always say it must be because I spent my childhood among all those gorgeous tropical trees and blossoms. But I don't seem to remember us making daisy chains of magnolias—do you ? ” (she wrote to Chaddie, years later).

It was rather the *quality* of her feeling for the ones she had—both in her childhood in New Zealand—and during her life, afterward :

“ To feel the flame at your throat as you used to imagine you felt the spot of yellow when Bogey held a buttercup under your chin.”

She saw Karori—saw Wellington—almost as though she looked at them through a flowering bush. And at 75 Tinakori Road, the parlour, the dining-room, were seen through this flowering bush too. She wrote to Chaddie (Marie) :

“ Cinerarias . . . blue ones—and the faint, faint pink kind. Mother loved them and we used to grow masses in a raised flower bed. I love the shape of the petals. It is so delicate. We used to have blue ones in pots in a rather white and gold drawing room that had green wooden sunblinds. Faint light, big cushions, tables with ‘ photographs of the children ’ in silver frames, some little yellow and black cups and saucers that belonged to Napoleon in a high cupboard and some one playing Chopin—beyond words playing Chopin.”

and

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

“ It’s strange we should all of us Beauchamps have this passion for flowers. . . . I have a large bunch of good old-fashioned marigolds on my table, buds, leaves, and all. They take me back to the black vase of ours at 75, one that you (Marie) used to like to put mignonette in. It was a charming vase and well in the van of fashion, wasn’t it? Do you remember the brown china (bear) on the top of the black what-not? I can see it ! ”

It was not the flowers in themselves that Katherine was then remembering—but flowers as the setting and the passion of the family at No. 75—flowers as the key to the life of the family there. At the memory of the flowers, “ all the life of that house flickers up, trembles, glows again, is rich again.” Those were words written by Katherine to John Galsworthy in praise of his picture of the Soames’s house in Bayswater Road, to which she responded as one who had also known and savoured the rich reality of Victorian middle-class life. She, too, could go back into a kindred past,

“ back to the dining-room at 75, to the proud and rather angry-looking seltzogene on the sideboard, with the little *bucket* under the spout. Do you remember that hiss it gave and sometimes a kind of groan? And the smell inside the sideboard of Worcester sauce and corks from old claret bottles ? ”

In this family, and the life they lived so closely together—with “ things ” so important to them, there was a kind of unity, partly because of the harmony between the father and mother—because she satisfied his needs so well and asked for nothing further—partly because (as in all New Zealand homes) the children were trained by the parents,

not by a nurse. They were brought up in "the English tradition," the mid-Victorian tradition, really; yet the contact between children and parents was much closer than in most English homes because in New Zealand the scarcity of maids for the household, and nurses for the children, demands a still closer contact. So there was a sense of living their lives *together*, of overlapping almost, of the whole family revolving about in one main current. It was in this way that Kezia—that Laura—remembered No. 75 :

"The father in his dressing-room—a familiar talk. His using her (the mother's) hair brushes—his passion for things that *wear well*. The children sitting around the table—a light outside; the silver. Her pity as she sees them all gathered together—her longing for them always to be *there*."

and

"Aunt Beryl, Aunt Harriet and Mother sat at the round table with big shallow teacups in front of them. In the dusky light, with their white puffed-up muslin blouses with wing sleeves, they were three birds at the edge of a lily pond. Beyond them the shadowy room melted into the shadowy air; the cut glass door-knob glittered—a song, a white butterfly with wings outspread—clung to the ebony piano."

It was this very sense of the tide sweeping in, sweeping out, bearing them all together in its swing to and from the beach and out to the sea again—the sense that their rhythm was from their unity—that they all seemed caught together in the ebb and flow of their lives—it was this sense which made Kass ("the odd one") feel her separateness. The

very things which bound the others together, seemed to help to cast her out. She was "different." They had simply "the family feeling" ; she was inoculated with something foreign :

" . . . I remember one birthday when you (Jeanne) bit me ! It was the same one when I got a doll's pram and in a rage let it go hurling by itself down the grassy slope outside the conservatory. Father was *awfully* angry and said no one was to speak to me. Also the white azalea bush was out. *And* Aunt Belle had brought from Sydney a new receipt for icing. It was tried on my cake, and it wasn't a great success because it was much too brittle. I can see and feel its smoothness now."

Her life was becoming a medley of living in the family's way, and living in strange, fierce, inexplicable ways of her own.

2

The Wellington Girls' College was a ten- or fifteen-minute walk down from Tinakori Road toward the Quay. It was a huge grey frame building, built about a year before Kathleen was born—the second girls' school to be established in Wellington. The first (built on Fitzherbert Terrace nearly ten years previous) was the more "exclusive" Terrace School to which the girls were sent three years later.

When Kathleen Beauchamp registered for the Second Form on May 25th, 1898, at nine years and seven months, the Wellington Girls' College was still a private school. The Prep. School was at the

front of the building, on the top floor, at the left of the high wooden tower. Seven girls sat in that small square room on the hard wooden benches of the Second Form. A large fireplace at the south end warmed them when the winds whipped across Lambton Harbour and whirled about the barn-like, unprotected school. Kathleen, from where she sat, could watch the waves lifting—lifting as far as she could see ; and the white line of foam running up to the scalloped bays. She loved a choppy sea ; it was her favourite sea—brilliant blue with an edge of white. But she hated the Southerly Buster in winter, when newspapers flew like kites down Thorndon Esplanade. The *phutukawas* (which in Auckland flaunted crimson plumage so proudly) were bowed abjectly on the Esplanade, too twisted and bent to bloom. In spring she could watch the leaves shaking in the tree tops about St. Paul's. There was “ a kind of whiteness in the sky over the sea,” then. She loved such days.

Marie, with her sandy hair dragged back by a comb she abominated, was in the same form. She and Kass were dressed alike. Vera was threatened with a disease which kept her away from school for the second and third terms. The five other girls were Alice, dark with Irish eyes (her father was Governor of the Fiji Islands) ; Esma Dean, her cousin, a fair, self-centred girl who lived with her ; Zoe (Kass liked Zoe for some reason), slight and sweet, with wavy brown hair and a fringe ; Irene, swarthy, straight-haired, appearing even darker in her short purple frock as she stood before the others reciting *The Revenge* in a deep voice with a great

deal of gusto ; and Marion Ruddick, Kathleen's special friend. How excited she had been on the day she exclaimed to Marion : " I'm so glad you're just the kind of a girl you are ! " and Marion had said the same to her.

Mr. and Mrs. Beauchamp had returned from their last trip to Canada on the same ship with the Ruddicks ; Mr. Ruddick was in the Government service in Wellington. When the mother introduced Marion to the children, they greeted her politely in the way they had been taught ; but Kass stared solemnly at the new girl. She was so prettily dressed. Little girls of New Zealand wore clumsily-cut, home-made frocks which made them appear even fatter than they were from the good butter and jams and cream buns of their six-times-tea.

Marion was a slim Canadian child in a well-cut sailor suit and pretty shoes. She had a style, a way of wearing her clothes, unknown among Wellington children. Her hair was in a fringe and loose dark curls. She had the glamour of a girl who had come across the South Sea from a country which had snow at Christmas. So Kass decided to like her and to speak to her. " Do you have parrots in Canada ? " she said.

Marion shared many things with her in play-time and at school. The best was the Green Gate. The worst was Miss Wilson—the strictest Mistress at the Prep. School—a stern-looking woman with crinkly black hair and a bright purple blouse. She never was satisfied with Marion's light, spiderish handwriting ; and when in sewing class, Kathleen's plump, inky fingers damply infused the stain into the

white fabric, the results were tragic. Both girls stood in awe of Miss Wilson, but they quickly saw through the defences of another Mistress who came to them for one class ; and all that they suffered at Miss Wilson's hands, they gave back (with the interest of a few added inventions of their own) to her. She found—not seven well-bred little girls with a lesson learned—but a rooster, a bee, a donkey, a laughing jackass, a “more pork,” a kitten, a cuckoo. And—after rapping a row of little dents in the desk with her ruler—after mildly protesting that “this wasn't a Zoo”—she left at the end of the hour reduced to despair, almost in tears.

At play-time, though the Prep. School had no real right in the Gym., Marion and Kass usually were first down. A rope, knotted at both ends, hung suspended from the ceiling. Each clinging to an end, they took turns in leaping from the mantelpiece and swinging out wildly the length of the long room and back again. One day they got into an argument as to who should swing first. Marion leaped into space with her end. Kass, not waiting for her to swing back, plunged furiously after her, and they met in mid-air with a terrific impact. Marion, the light child, was hurled to the floor, where she lay stunned, until Irene ran to revive her with water.

After the Karori Primary School the girls found even this elementary Prep. School difficult, for their preparation was uneven. They had to take some of their classes with Form I. Kass had been so clever in arithmetic at Karori ; but here she descended to

the First Form, though she was top of it at the end of her third term.

That was a proud prize-giving day for Kathleen Beauchamp—December, 1899. It was a summer evening. Her father, mother, grandmother, Marie, and Vera went with her to the big school hall, decorated with flags and foliage from the bush. While the College girls sang Christmas carols and two-part songs, Kass and Marie sat with their father and mother on the long form benches, twisting the corners of their starched Sunday pinafores, until their names were called out by Dr. John Innes for the awards. The visitors applauded dutifully, while the girls went up to receive, from the Chief Justice, the prizes they had won. Kass went up for three: one in Form II. for English (which meant literature, composition, history and geography); and two for Form I.—arithmetic and French. Marie had a prize for needlework for Form II. Even though some other girl had won the special recitation prize, it was a famous time. The winners were named in *The Dominion* that evening; and they were listed in *The Reporter*, the school magazine, which included Kathleen's second printed "story."

Mr. Beauchamp had been Justice of the Peace in Karori. He was visiting Justice in Wellington. In view of his later almost unprecedented move: sending his daughters "home" to college—the speech which followed the prize-giving was perhaps one of the most important which Kathleen Beauchamp ever sat through:

"Sir Robert Stout congratulated the students;

he said reports showed parents that the children obtained the best possible education at the school ; that it was now recognized they must have not only higher education, but also higher education for women. Men and women were on the same platform now in almost everything and it would be a disgrace to the community if it did not make as ample provision for the higher education of girls and women as it did for that of boys and men. They were still far behind other countries in that respect. If they examined statistics of the United States they would find that relative to population, N.Z. did not have at her high schools and colleges half the number of boys and girls or lads and lasses that she ought to have receiving higher education. He knew the great struggle there had been in Wellington even to maintain the Girls' H.S. He said the G.H.S. was praised for the high place students had gained in Wellington College. In conclusion, after some words of counsel to the students, he urged the claims of the school to the support of the citizens, who, he hoped, would strain every nerve to give their children higher education. Parents who gave their children higher education gave them better dowry than money."

Even after thirty years, Vera remembered Kathleen's excitement that night over her printed "story." The first printed criticism of her work had appeared the year before (1898) when she was nine. It was written by the Sixth Form Editor of *The Reporter* as a footnote to her first published sketch :

" This story, written by one of the girls who have lately entered the school, shows promise of great

merit. We shall always be pleased to receive contributions from members of the lower forms.—ED.”

3

In their short holidays the children followed the little scalloped bays along the shore to Island Bay. Island Bay was just a suburb of Wellington around the point toward Happy Valley. It was all inlets and rocky caves ; a wild man lived in one of them (so they said). He made the expedition uncertain and daring ; but unlike Old Underwood, he hid himself well away and so was rarely cornered. Long afterward, Kathleen wrote to Mr. Ruddick :

“Does Marion remember Island Bay, I wonder, and bathing her doll in the rock pools with me ? . . . I wonder if she has forgotten our games at Miss Partridge’s, or old Miss Partridge’s way of saying : ‘Oh, I’m so tired !’ Or the cream buns we were given for tea. I must say I think the cream buns should have been withheld from me, though.”

The girls learned to swim and dive, in those days, at the Thorndon Sea Baths, below the Quay, where they were taken three times a week. For years they remembered the seaweedy odour, the gritty marmalade sandwiches which they devoured afterward, and the lemonade they drank while the elders drank tea.

There were games : tennis on the hard court at No. 75 ; and, while they lived there—billiards.

“ . . . Billiards. . . . It’s a fascinating game. I remember learning to hold a cue at Sir Joseph Ward’s, and I can see now R.’s super refinement as if she

expected each ball to be stamped with a coronet before she would deign to hit it."

There were a few parties, usually for tea, but an occasional one in the evening when they were "invited out," and brought "slippers in a satin bag." Sometimes there were dances of the kind authorised then :

"Somewhere quite near someone is playing very old-fashioned dance tunes on a cheap piano, things like the Lancers, you know. Some minute part of me not only dances to them but goes faithfully through Ladies in the Centre, Visiting, Set to Corners, and I can even feel the sensation of clasping warm young hands in white silk gloves, and shrinking from Maggie Owen's hand in Ladies' Chain because she wore no gloves at all."

After they had moved back to town, Mr. Beauchamp bought the country place at Day's Bay, near Mirimar, for the children's long holidays.

There was no road around the edge of the Harbour then ; the only way to reach the Bay was by *The Duke* or *The Duchess*, sailing across Lambton Harbour. Often the girls held each other's heads for that rough half hour. Day's Bay was a quiet place, a paradise for children. Zoe was at a cottage near the Beauchamps' and the Walter Nathans were not far away ; but except for a pavilion occasionally open for entertainment, these few families had the Bay to themselves. Kass and Marion spent their December summer holidays there. To the Canadian child, this semi-tropical life was filled with surprise :

"When we weren't paddling in the sea, we were digging sand castles with marvellous moats and draw-

bridges. Zoe initiated us into the joys of shrimping in the rock pools ; and we loved seeing shrimps back, in their silly way, into the nets. We thought it cruel to have them plunged into boiling water alive, but the assurance that they were killed instantly, and the lovely salmony pink colour they turned to from a dull greenish grey, compensated us for the boiling process. From delving in the rock pools, we evolved the idea of rock pool gardens ; each selecting a pool, we collected seaweed, pearly shells, coloured stones, sea anemones and star fish. I vaguely remember Christmas at the Bay. I gave Kass a thimble in a green plush case, and felt at the time that she would have much preferred a book. To Jeanne I gave a pink and white dolls' teapot, which she still talks about. 'Chummie' had a toy dancing bear, and that is all I remember except a present that I received of a large mauve box of chocolate almonds with a pair of gilt tongs on top. It was my first real box of sweets—from a friend of my father—and Kass and I were both quite overcome by such magnificence."

The quietness of Day's Bay became, for Katherine Mansfield, a standard of stillness. It was only of the heightened sense of absolute stillness produced by isolation and illness and "a sky like lead" that she could say it was "much quieter than Day's Bay." That meant a superhuman, or even an inhuman stillness—the quietness that descends upon one who has drifted out of life itself. The quietness of Day's Bay represented a perfection of human stillness, friendly and benign. It was of Day's Bay and her summers there that she was thinking when, in a mood of happiness in a Paris spring,—when, as she walked, "the air just lifts enough to blow on your cheeks. Ah, how delicious that is!"—she tried to make a present of her happiness to a friend.

"There is a wharf not far from here where the sand barges unload. Do you know the smell of wet sand? Does it make you think of going down to the beach in the evening light after a rainy day and gathering the damp driftwood (it will dry on the top of the stove) and picking up for a moment the long branches of seaweed that the waves have tossed and listening to gulls who stand reflected in the gleaming sand, and just fly a little way off as you come and then—settle again?"

4

At Karori, her own country had lain "beyond the Blue Mountains." When she returned to Tinakori Road, it lay beyond the Green Gate. She was always—all her life long—to have this escape—this country of her mind. For years it was the Heron, that perfect house beneath the flowery trees where she would create her own world, live in the company of those radiant beings, "her people." Nearer the end of her life when her disease had made her even more of an exile, it became "the silent world"; then "no one knew where she was":

"... I have felt very often lately as though the silence had some meaning beyond these signs, these intimations. Isn't it possible that if one yielded there is a whole world into which one is received? It is so near and yet I am conscious that I hold back from giving myself up to it. What is this something mysterious that waits—that beckons?"

The Green Gate was far on this side of those borders; yet it was beyond the known land. Behind it were flowers, and enchantment. It was guarded (both she and Marion liked to believe) by a fiery

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

dragon. Many times the two girls passed it as they flew up Hill Street to the Golder Hill house, where Kathleen was allowed to visit Marion Ruddick. Many times they crept to the Green Gate, longing yet fearing to open it ; always something drew them back in time.

In the Golder Hill garden they sat in the acacia tree eating little fluted cakes of Canadian maple sugar brought by Marion from Canada. From their high leafy perch, they could look into the Convent square ; they could even see the ripple across the grass, across the beds of freezias. Was it the wind shaking them, or were they heavy with bees ? Kathleen was never in that garden more than once or twice ; yet from the acacia tree she was at home in that square. They could see the Harbour from their high seat. On some rare days the water turned the colour of New Zealand jade—jade that the Maoris mined in the South Island. In 1915 her brother gave her a *tiki** made of it, which she wore round her neck till she died.

Marion told stories of her own country : “ sliding down snow-covered hills on sleds and driving in red sleighs with jingling bells through forests of living Christmas trees ” ; and she remembered, afterward, that : “ Every tree in the Golder Hill garden contained a wood nymph and every flower a fairy. The big *rata* tree with its shaggy red blossoms we called ‘ the fire tree ’ and its flowers were burning tongues of flame.” They tried poetry, as they sat in the tree

* A *tiki* is a charm of polished greenstone worn by the Maori women on a thread of flax about their necks. And for an encounter because of this particular *tiki*, see *Letters I.*, page 192.



DAY'S BAY

looking out over the Convent garden and the Harbour. Marion remembers their struggle with an *Ode to a Snowdrop*. They kept that kingdom to themselves.

There were other "moments, glimpses, even, before which all else pales." Up through the wild bush at the back of Day's Bay were the "ferny paths" winding lazily through tree fern : umbrella fern with dark green leaves spreading out from the centre like a star fish ; lace fern, aromatic in the hot sunshine ; the real climbing fern, *Mange-Mange*, twisting over bushes and trees with its stem so uniform that the Maoris wove baskets from it, and used it as rope to fasten the thatch to their roofs. There was King Fern with little boat-shaped seeds ; and Crown Fern with a perfect little crown in each section of stem.

Over the second range beyond the Bay was a beech grove—nothing but beeches over the whole hill top. The leaves were like lace—like dark brown lace. Light coming through them made another world, like the light beneath water. The girls walking in this wood were tempted to step very high (as they stepped to escape crabs in the rock pools at the Bay). To walk through this odd light was like walking through the clearest of rain water ; the slim tree-trunks glistened whitely, like stems beneath water, too ; small roots twining lacily over the bare ground were like roots washed bare at the bottom of the sea. Did they merely imagine that the bell bird sounded different here ? That it was like a bell heard across lonely water ?

In spring, the fern-like dark beech leaves with

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

flaming Iceland poppies, and boronia—little tight bunches heaped in the huge baskets with daphne—were sold down on the corners of Lambton Quay.

People stood talking, gesturing with unwrapped flowers.

As she pinned boronia on her coat, Kathleen thought that nothing could bring the woods down into the city as that beech fern—as those minute bronze bells of boronia, splotted with their own sunlight and with a fragrance like none other on earth. On early mornings, when the flowers had just come heavy with scent from the Hutt Valley, she stood pressed against the windows of flower shops and “gazed into them as small boys are supposed to gaze into pastry-cooks.”

Nothing could so bring back New Zealand spring—(azalea bushes in the Botanical Garden, beds of cinerarias at Tinakori Road, or flower baskets on Lambton Quay)—as the heavy scent of boronia :

“ I’d like to send you seeds from the far corners of the earth and have a boronia plant below the studio window. Do you know the scent of boronia ? My grandmother and I were very fond of going to a place called McNab’s Tea Gardens, and there we used to follow our noses and track down the boronia bushes. Oh, how I must have tired the darling out ! I t doesn’t bear thinking about.”

In their own garden at No. 75 there were “ glimpses,” too :

“ ‘ I remember ruffling the violet leaves. . . . Do you remember that some of the pears we found used to have little teeth marks in them ? ’

“ ‘ Who bit them ? ’

“ ‘ It was always a mystery ’ .”

As, years later, at Hampstead, she had “ moments ” of that same faëriiness intruding over the borders from another world :

“ There is nobody in the house, and yet whose is this faint whispering ? On the stairs there are tiny spots of gold—tiny foot-prints.”

The Green Gate hid the enchanted garden—for how long ? Yet (as Marion remembers) the day came when they must know :

“ Cautiously we pulled the latch and pushed it slowly open. There was our garden, a riot of colour, but there also was the dragon in the form of a gardener. With a roar of rage he advanced toward us with a rake in his hand, and we needed no second warning. We simply flew up the hill, not stopping once until we were in my mother’s sitting-room, where cambric tea awaited us and thin slabs of bread and butter with many coloured ‘ hundreds and thousands,’ so beloved of Kass and me.”

Kathleen was nearly twelve, then ; her childhood was almost over. Her father was arranging to send the three girls to the more “ exclusive ” Terrace School on Fitzherbert Terrace. Marion was going to the South Island to a boarding school. Kathleen saw Marion for the last time at an exhibition, where she went with Gran and Marie to watch Marion dance a minuet with three other girls. Already she was conscious of the breaking away of things which had bound her—conscious of new tides rising in her.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

It was less than half realised ; she only knew a certain strange stirring.

She said good-bye to Marion : “ You lucky girl to be going away to school ! ”

"When does one *really begin* a journey—or a friendship—or a love affair? It is those beginnings which are so fascinating and so misunderstood. There comes a moment when we realize we are already well on our way—*déjà*."—*K. M. (Letters.)*

I

WHEN the three Beauchamps entered the School in Fitzherbert Terrace, in June, 1900, their Wellington High School friends felt that "the girls looked down on them." Miss Swainson's Terrace School was a step up the social ladder. Also, it was an advance to a new terror.

"Ole Underwood" would come singing from Wadestown, hide behind the wind-blown evergreens that lined the centre of Fitzherbert Terrace, and jump out at the children, chasing them shrieking into school. He was a prospector—a gold-hunter from early settlement days—no one knew just what. Swarthy—more like an Italian than an Englishman—he always wore a postman's cap; and gleaming out from his long black hair was a pair of little gold earrings. While he was let alone he paid scant attention to other people—just drifted down from the hills, through the town to the Chinaman's Shop, where he sat among cases of fruit and argued in a

loud voice with the quiet, discreet Chinamen. He had one sensitive point: he couldn't endure a whistle. Yet he seemed magnetised back and back again to the Terrace where the small brothers of the Terrace School girls: Leslie Beauchamp, Cheviot Bell (who were in the Primary School) strolled along nonchalantly, whistling to themselves. Then with a howl of rage he would tear bark, twigs, anything, from the trees that concealed him, and rush after them. In consequence the girls arrived at this "exclusive" school flushed and panting and dishevelled, until Mr. Beauchamp—who was a visiting Justice of Peace—had him "charged as a rogue and a vagabond to serve some time in jail."

The school had been built at 20 Fitzherbert Terrace in 1878 by Mrs. Swainson. Three years before the Beauchamp girls entered, Miss Mary Swainson had taken charge of it, but she was not the stuff of which Head Mistresses are made; and the following year she engaged Mrs. Henry Smith as Head Mistress. Mr. Robert Parker taught music—though Miss Swainson, herself, led the singing—and Eva Butts taught elocution, arithmetic and geography.

Two of these served Katherine Mansfield as characters later. All four were distinctive individuals; and—as afterward at Queen's College in London—Kathleen Beauchamp was more interested in their individuality than she was in the instruction they dispensed. She easily pierced through to their "secret" as she sat in the Form, gazing up at them while they taught.

THE TERRACE SCHOOL

Eva Butts was a young school-mistress at the age when she would be "just one of the girls"—a trifle out of their ken, of course—a leader, glamorous, radiating light. She was one of those who must hold court, must have an entourage.

Often she arrived a trifle late in the morning—late to prayers and to class. She made an *entrance*, sweeping her train behind her. Her purple tweed was flecked with white, giving it a dusty look; it fitted close, showing her figure. "Figures" were in style then; and though she was thin, her tweed was cut to rise and fall in the proper places. Her long strands of hair were wound round and round and round about her head; and very light eyelashes gave her blue eyes a wide child-like candour in surprising contrast to the studied sophistication. She was one of the few people to whom light eyelashes can add distinctiveness.

A certain Mary—who was "the model pupil" while Kass was "the rebel"—looked discreetly down at her paper as she sat at "attention." Though her expression would never have betrayed her, she was thinking privately that she didn't believe Eva Butts knew much, or that her mind was on her teaching; she went out to dances in the evening; her mind must be on them—not her work.

Kass was leaning on her elbows, chin in her hand, looking up through her lashes at Miss Butts. She didn't trouble to veil her slightly ironic smile; she scorned "attention" as humiliating.

Yet she tolerated—even sometimes liked—Miss Butts, who didn't attempt to make her conform, like Mrs. Henry Smith. Miss Butts "tried to correct

her comps " and told her " they never are on the subject assigned " ; yet she was sometimes amused by them, though she thought Kass untidy and careless and lacking concentration. Kass was one of her " circle "—rebellious spirits, six or eight—rebellious against what they considered narrowness and provincialism.

Kathleen and her friend " Diddy " (Hilda) Nathan tried to " reform " the girls at the Terrace School. Diddy had entered from the Convent on the rise above Hill Street, and Kass came up from the Girls' High School. They felt there were too many " barbarians " in Miss Swainson's. Diddy was a sweet-looking girl, rather chunky, like Kass. Unlike Kass, however, she took many things for granted. She had a fund of sympathetic and romantic feeling, and this drew the two together ; though Kass sometimes hurt her by unexpected changes in attitude which she was unable to understand.

Diddy hadn't noticed what Miss Butts did when the last bell rang at school ; but Kass threw a little sidelong glance at Mary. Mary looked away ; she was thinking privately that Kass wasn't bright—that she never could spell. She must be difficult to teach, just sitting, wondering whether to agree, or not ; it was disconcerting to the teachers.

Kass was watching Miss Butts who had changed into a riding habit. A horse was waiting at the door. She mounted, and rode grandly up and down Fitzherbert Terrace before everyone.

Mrs. Henry Smith expected to stay at school until late, even though she had her home as well as the school to manage. She had married beneath her socially, and "had a hard life." It made her abnormally strict, though she was really a kind and a just woman. In some matters she was in advance of her day : she introduced school-journalism, and encouraged a group of girls to form their own club, and to write and edit their magazine. But she believed in rules and in implicit, unquestioning obedience. The girls had to march like soldiers, to rise in a body when she, the Head Mistress, entered the room—irrespective of what they might be working upon at the moment. She was a straight, tiny, determined-looking woman with a sense of humour rigidly concealed beneath a sense of duty. She built her schools so firmly upon discipline that one which she had owned went to pieces when her successor tried "to rule by love." She believed in personal discipline, too. One girl who mumbled was kept standing on the platform for hours, reading slowly and distinctly : yet the "discipline" never improved her enunciation.

Mrs. Henry Smith remembered Kathleen Beauchamp because she began and edited the first magazine at Miss Swainson's. It was called *The School*, and was to remain as a permanent institution, though the name was later translated into Maori. Kathleen was the leader of a group that met upstairs, under the eaves (rather influenced by *Little Women* perhaps) and keeping the "literary

club" and its activities secret. *The School* was composed of jokes collected from grown-up papers and "original" stories. Kathleen's was a story about a dog: "The door opened and in-flu-Enza." The first issue (for club members only) was copied in Kathleen's irregular, rather distinctive hand, on large double sheets of foolscap. Several of the girls kept their copies for nearly thirty years because of one contributor who they believed would "do something" in the future; but as she never was heard of again, the copies of *The School* were gradually destroyed. There may be one in existence, somewhere, but it seems doubtful.

Mrs. Henry Smith thought Kathleen was "a thundercloud" among the other girls of the family. Vera was pretty and affectionate. Several times she showed affection for Mrs. Smith; but there never was a sign of it from Kathleen. Jeanne looked like Alice-in-Wonderland—quaint and dainty. The Beauchamps were affectionate among themselves: "an affectionate family." But Kathleen seemed to her "a very unpolished diamond, while the others were too polished." She was "plain," "a surly sort of a girl"—"imaginative to the point of untruth." Even the other girls used to say of her stories: "Oh, wait till to-morrow and it will be different!"

Kathleen didn't conceal her dislike when Mrs. Henry Smith returned her compositions with severe criticism. Like Miss Butts, she told her they were poorly written, poorly spelled, and careless. Then she added a few points of her own: they were "too prolific"—she wrote so much that she spoiled

THE TERRACE SCHOOL

her writing—"though it had something original about it." Kathleen had been given two subjects for compositions. "One," said Mrs. Henry Smith, 'was good. The other wasn't because it was about school life, and no girl should write about school girls : she put *herself* in too much."

Long afterward, the Head Mistress explained : "The family was very conventional ; Kass was the outlaw. No one here saw that the unconventionality and rebellion had something behind it. Nobody, I think, understood that or her. They just tried to make her conform : reprimanded her for errors in spelling, carelessness, and poor writing. But that was 'the method' in those days."

Yet it was not all suppression. When Kathleen arranged and directed "Mrs. Jarley's Wax Works," a school benefit for the Polynesian Missions, some of her newly awakening life was allowed wings. She was influenced by her reading, of course : but she added her own inventions. Excitement was added to the performance by a visitor from England (the Rev. Charles Prodgers) who didn't conceal his amusement and delight in Kathleen Beauchamp's unique exhibition. He was perhaps the first to realise something of the promise in her individuality. Before he returned to England, he wrote in her album :

"With every good wish for '*Mrs. Jarley's*' future success."

3

Mr. Robert Parker taught Kathleen pianoforte for two years. Vera was the better musician, the

better student of music ; but even thirty years later he remembered Kass—"Well . . . very well. I can see her sitting there at the piano . . . her very attitude. It is remarkable how she noticed details at her age. The pale picture of Rubinstein (there it is) did hang above the mantelpiece, though there was no inscription ; and the picture of Solitude was over the piano. She has the room down exactly in that—what shall I call it?—that very sentimental little piece about me in *The Wind Blows*."

But Mr. Parker was renowned for sentiment. He leaned over a little as he talked, rubbing together those pale, slim, well-groomed hands. His slightly stooped shoulders seemed bent rather from hovering above his guests—so courteously, so solicitously—than from any stoop of age. His beautiful long hair was brushed smoothly back. It gleamed with its own light. His features, aquiline ; his mouth, full and a trifle loose ; but it was his eyes—the meaning glance in them. In the "quiet cave" of his studio, a music lesson with Mr. Parker could be a sedative, it could be a cocktail. Unimportant the composition :

" ' Nellie Bly
Caught a fly
Put it in her tea ! "

"This exquisite morceau was in *my* pianoforte Tutor, words and all. Who could have composed it?"

He had the rare power of transmitting his own delight in music ; and music was his life—taught at Miss Swainson's School. He was on the staff until he was nearly eighty years old ; even then he was as courtly as ever ; and even after that his own

THE TERRACE SCHOOL

students still felt that his look had some special meaning, some significance for them, alone.

Miss Mary Swainson herself took music lessons from him for years ; and she sang to his accompaniment at St. Paul's. The girls even told how the sexton had overlooked them when they were rehearsing one evening and locked them in the Cathedral.

If her singing class dragged, the girls wished Mr. Parker would look in, for then all lessons stopped ; and they could have a little chat while the Mistress swept forward with her best outside-of-school smile. Kass glanced sideways at Diddy, when she saw the door open ; but Diddy looked back at her, smiling pleasantly and raising her brows in a question : " What do you mean ? " Mary looked discreetly down her nose.

4

There was one other at the Terrace School who claimed Kathleen's special notice. Martha-Grace, " Princess Maata " among her own people, was a half-caste Maori girl a form or two above Kass at school.

The Maoris, from the first, had been accepted in New Zealand on an equal social basis with the English, and were absorbed into the white population. They became a kindly, a courteous and an amiable people, with a leaning toward beauty, a flair for fantasy, a greater receptivity. They took on most of the physical characteristics of the English—a fair skin, blue eyes, often—but their eyes were

limpid ; they had a softer, warmer look—a look of kindness and sympathy and humour. It was by this that the Maori blood might be detected as well as by deep kindness, gentleness and sweetness of nature and instinctive courtesy.

Maata was not typical, either of the Maoris or the blending of Maori and English blood ; partly, perhaps, because her social position was unique. Maata was said to be a Maori princess in her own right, as well as heiress to Maori holding, and very wealthy. She had lived in the city, and had been educated as an English girl ; yet there was little of the English in Maata's assured presence ; and none of the English in her hot, glowing eyes.

They were wide-set, amazing in their dark fiery beauty. She knew how to use them, too. Something in the way her lips curved upward when she smiled was very telling. She appeared rather Spanish with her warm skin, and nose a trifle spatulate, yet fine ; and the rich, bright colours she wore. A glowing, passionate stream coursed through her veins ; her skin *looked* warm ; it was hot to the touch from the secret fire that flashed so beautifully in her eyes. The Maoris would have said she possessed *mana*—"personal magnetism."

To all the girls there was something romantic about Maata—something in herself, even apart from the title of "Princess." And Kathleen loved her. Maata imparted to her a warmth as no one else could at that time. She caught some of the fire and felt it fly through her own blood. She felt ardent toward Maata—she felt she adored her—"she worshipped her."

THE TERRACE SCHOOL

Yet because Kathleen had been conventionally brought up, the girls were forced to keep their meetings clandestine.

Years after—in the autumn of 1913—Katherine Mansfield drafted a novel with Maata, for its central character. In Paris that winter she wrote the first chapters of *Maata*, catching something of the flame and the passion—something of the Maata of those days when they both were in their teens ; but her writing was interrupted unexpectedly, and she never was able to complete the “novel.”

Maata, herself, despite her fiery beauty and her expensive education in “town”—or perhaps because of these things—lived a brief and varied and unhappy life. Her conjugal history was not unlike that of Armena down in the country of Marlborough Sounds.

“ All love is sweet ;
Given or returned. Common as light is love,
And its familiar voice wearies not ever.
They who inspire it most are fortunate
. . . but they who feel it most
Are happier still.”—*P. B. S.*

Kathleen M. Beauchamp 27/6/03. (Album.)

I

By 1903, when she was thirteen, Kathleen Beauchamp was developing emotionally with almost terrifying rapidity. Perhaps her friendship with Maata had begun her awakening. She began to be self-conscious, to perceive, and even to analyse the effect of her own emotions. As she looked back three years later at this consciousness, she recorded some of the moods and emotions, thinly veiling the record as a “novel” in which she called herself “Juliet.”

There had already been the birthday when she was given a doll’s pram, and “in a rage let it go hurling by itself down the grassy slope outside the conservatory.” And one of her friends remembered that :

“ She was very excitable in those days and often in a furious rage. I remember one day she gave a squeel of rage and pinched her sister Vera for some small trifle.”

FIRST LOVE

She, though finding these moments inexplicable at the time, afterward with searching sincerity before herself, concluded: "Strangely enough these fits are Father and Leslie over again."

But this was her immediate record in *Juliet*:

" 'We've told Father all about it, Juliet,' said Margaret. 'And Father's fearfully angry.' Mary nodded. Juliet slipped the thing down the front of her sailor blouse. She had no definite idea of what she had been intending, but her head was full of strange, unreasonable impulses. She was feeling slightly sorry for her breach of self-control in that it incurred a long interview with her Father and with all probability some degrading issue—no jam for a week, or to bed at seven o'clock until she apologised. She walked slowly to the house, up the broad stone steps into the wide hall—and knocked at the Morning-room door.

"At two o'clock in the afternoon, Juliet had thrown a heavy book at her eldest sister Margaret—and a bottle of ink at her elder sister Mary. At six in the evening she was summoned to the Morning-room to explain these offences. After her too wholly successful acts of violence, she had retired to the sloping lawn at the extreme end of the garden, where she lay down comfortably and had some jam—Margaret and Mary, still smoking from the shock to their sensitive little systems, had rather rejoiced in the search for her, and especially in the knowledge that Mr. Blakewell was foaming up and down . . . "

Behind it, in part, was the childish longing—of which Katherine spoke often in later life—to be understood: to feel the warmth of immediate and instinctive protection, of the nest of safety which she invariably found with her Grandmother, less frequently with her mother. In childhood, save with

the Grandmother, she was a prey to the feeling that she was a pariah. Part of the preciousness of the portrait of her Grandmother as a newly-married bride which she possessed was that it had been given to her by her mother "at a time when she loved me." The phrase is eloquent.

"It was the freedom of those days" (she wrote in London in 1908) "the knowledge that—an she would—she could shake from her all the self-forged chains—banish all—and pillow her head in her Mother's lap. All that unbelievably gone now."

"An she would"—but she had the sensitive pride of the child who is marked as being "different"; and she wore (even then, at times) the mask which was to become her frequent protection before strangers in later years. She was not—and she knew she could not be—an exhibition child. She could not play the part which too often grown-ups unconsciously demand that their children shall play. But her longing to have her own role, and to give love and to receive it, was soon to find expression. It was only too ready to burst forth in a passion of adolescent love.

2

As nothing can stale the wonder of love as it suddenly flowers at fourteen, so there is nothing to prepare for it. It is a miracle. All else has had its warning, its intimations, some faint echo in the consciousness from experience at an age before perception; or some "memory" before consciousness began. But adolescent love comes from the

FIRST LOVE

unknown. Who can say it is less "real" than "real love" (when it comes); that it is less keen?

"I am alone in the house. . . . Footsteps pass and re-pass—that is a marvellous sound—and the low voices—talking on—dying away. It takes me back years—to the agony of *waiting* for one's love."

When Katherine first heard Arnold Trowell play the 'cello, he was already a "wunderkind." Gerardy had heard him; he must be sent to Frankfort (the Master said) to study at the Hoch Conservatorium under Hugo Becker. Not only was he to be the youngest pupil receiving instruction from that celebrated teacher (Arnold was fifteen), but the first to become a pupil without having gone through a preparatory course at the Conservatorium. He was Wellington's acknowledged genius; the city itself was raising the funds to send him abroad to study.

Katherine met him at her own house at a "musical" (as Juliet calls it in her "novel"). What must have been the effect on one who had all the unawakened responses to art in a country which had had no art to offer? It is doubtful whether she had ever heard a 'cello (she herself says that she had not). There was no music; there were no plays or pictures or new books in Wellington in those days.

Fortunately, we possess in the first chapter of *Juliet*, Kathleen's own account of her meeting with Arnold Trowell. It is youthful, as it should be—the writing of a girl: yet somehow this self-portrait of a girl is completely convincing.

"Juliet sat in front of the mirror brushing her hair. Her face was thoughtful and her hands trembled per-

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

ceptibly. Suddenly she bent forward and stared at her reflection. . . . Her face was square in outline, and her skin very white. The impression which it gave was not by any means strictly beautiful. When in repose it conveyed an idea of extreme thoughtfulness ; her mouth dropped slightly at the corners ; her eyes were shadowed—but her expression was magnetic—her personality charged with vitality. She looked a dreamer—but her dreams were big with life.

“ But Juliet noticed none of these characteristics. Since her very early days she had cultivated the habit of conversing very intimately with the Mirror face.

“ Her childhood had been lonely—the dream face her only confidant. She was the second in a family of four. The eldest girl, Margaret, was now seventeen. Juliet was fourteen—and then two babies, Mary and Henry, aged seven and six, respectively. The mother was a slight, pale little woman. She had been delicate and ailing before her marriage and she never could forget it.

“ Margaret and she looked after the babies and Mr. Wilberforce, a tall, grey-bearded man with prominent blue eyes—large, ungainly hands, and inclined to stoutness, was a general merchant, director of several companies, chairman of several societies, thoroughly commonplace and commercial. The great part of his life had been spent in New Zealand, and all the children had been born there.

“ Juliet was the odd moment of the family—the ugly duckling. She had lived in a world of her own—created her own people—read anything and everything which came to hand—was possessed with a violent temper, and completely lacked placidity. She was dominated by her moods which swept through her and in number were legion. She had been, as yet, utterly idle at school—drifted through her classes, picked up a quantity of heterogeneous knowledge and all the pleadings and protestations of her teachers could not induce her to learn that which did not

FIRST LOVE

appeal to her. She absorbed everybody and everything with which she came in contact, and wrapped herself in a fierce white reserve. 'I have four passions,' she wrote in an old diary—'Nature, people, mystery, and, the fourth no man can number.' Of late she had quarrelled frequently with the entire family through lack of anything definite to occupy her thoughts. She had no defined path, no goal to reach. She felt compelled to vent her energy upon somebody, and that somebody was her family.

"The large bedroom where she slept looked very dim and dark. There was a small fire in the grate, and a big rocking chair before it, but these were the two positive luxuries the room boasted of. Pictures were conspicuous by their absence, and all those little familiar things which marked the sum total of so many girls' bedrooms found no place here. The long, unvarnished bookshelf was nailed above the bed, and a most miscellaneous collection of volumes found a resting place there. A glass of red roses stood on the dressing-table, and all her party clothes were carefully laid out on a chair. She dressed very deliberately in her white muslin frock—open at the neck—showing her full, round throat—and tied her broad silk sash. Her hair hung in two great braids, unadorned with combs or ribbon. She put up her hands and patted its smooth, heavy folds. Juliet's hands were as distinctive as any part of her. They were large and exquisitely modelled. Her fingers were not very long—and blunted at the tops, but no amount of work could change their beauty. She gesticulated a great deal, and had a habit of sitting always nursing one knee—her fingers inter-locked.

"Before leaving her room, she crossed over to the window. Outside a great pine tree was outlined against the night sky—and the sea, stretching far in the distance—called to her—'Juliet—Juliet.'

"'O night,' she cried—leaning far out and turning her face up to the stars. 'O adorable night.' . . .

"Then she picked up her long cloak and ran

lightly downstairs. In the hall her Mother and Father were waiting. Mr. Wilberforce, wrapping up his throat in a great silk handkerchief, with all that care and precision so common to perfectly healthy men who imagine they wrestle with weak constitutions.

" 'We shall drop you at Mrs. Cecil's on the way, Juliet,' said her mother, carefully drawing on her long evening gloves, 'and then at ten o'clock you can call for us at Mrs. Black's, and we shall come back together. You can wait in the hall if we're not ready. It's only a musical party.'

"The girl replied, and they walked out of the house, down the broad stone steps, and up the long moonlit road. In the presence of so many stars and so many trees, Juliet utterly forgot all the petty grievances of the day. She walked along beside her parents and 'let it all sink in.'

" 'Do be careful of your clothes, child,' the mother said, as Mr. Wilberforce held the gate open for her, 'and don't be late.' . . . In front of her was the brilliantly lighted house ; sounds of merriment came to her—uproarious laughter, shrieks of excitement. And for two hours she played as vigorously as the rest ; then—inwardly rebelling and very satisfied when the clock pointed to five minutes to ten. The 'party' stood and watched her from the door—cried to her not to be afraid—to remember 'ghosts in the garden,' but she laughed, and holding her coat tightly around her, ran the whole length of the way.

"On the doorstep of Mrs. Black's, she paused to recover breath, and a faint, a very faint wave of music was wafted to her.

"The drawing-room seemed extraordinarily bright after the night outside. She was a little confused at first. The maid had said that they were all at supper, and she was to wait there. She went over to a table, and bent over a bowl of flowers, but the sound of a chair being pushed back in a corner caused her to look up, startled. A boy of very much her own age was watching her curiously. He stood beside a great

FIRST LOVE

lamp, and the light fell full on his face and his profusion of red-brown hair. Very pale he was, with a dreamy, exquisite face, and a striking suggestion of confidence and power in every feature.

"Juliet felt a great wave of colour spread over her face and neck. They stood staring into each other's eyes ; then he walked up to the table where she stood, a faint smile playing around his lips.

" ' If you are fond of flowers, there are roses just outside the window,' he said, ' and you can reach out your hands and touch them ; the scent is perfect. Come and see.'

" Side by side they crossed over to the great open window. Both leaned out. O the late roses below them—thousands, there seemed to Juliet. . . .

" ' Will you tell me your name ?'

" ' Juliet—and yours ?'

" ' David. I am a musician. I have been playing to-night—a 'cellist you know. I am going to Europe next year.'

" ' I, too, but not for music—to complete my education.'

" ' Do you want to go away ?'

" ' Yes—and no. I long for fresh experiences—new places—but I shall miss the things that I love here.'

" ' Do you like nights, Juliet ?'

" ' I feel like a chrysalis in the daytime—compared to my feelings after sunset . . . ' said Juliet sadly. ' There are few opportunities . . . and a 'cello ; I have never heard a 'cello.'

" . . . ' Then I shall be the first to show you what can be,' he said.

" . . . The walk home was silent. Margaret was awaiting their arrival, and immediately began telling Mrs. Wilberforce how ' used up ' the babies seemed. Henry had certainly a beastly little cough, and Mary looked so pasty.

" ' We shall leave town in a couple of days,' Mrs. Wilberforce said. ' To-morrow that young boy is

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

coming here to play, and father has asked a few men.'

"Juliet bade them goodnight and fled up to her room. Her heart was beating furiously. She could hardly repress a feeling of the most intense joy that bade her cry out. She sat on the side of the bed, staring at the darkness, her breath coming quickly. Sleep was impossible. The world had changed, and he was coming again to-morrow and she should hear him play. She crept into bed and lay still thinking. A curious sensation stole over her—as though she was drifting into a great fiery sea of thoughts—and every thought was sweet.

"When she pulled up the blind next morning the trees outside were being tossed to and fro . . . and the sea lashed into fury by a wild south-easterly gale. Juliet shuddered. The wind always hurt her—unsettled her. It was a Saturday, so there was no thought of school. She wandered about all the morning, and in the afternoon put on her reefer coat and went for a walk up the hills that spread like a great wall behind the little town. The wind blew fiercer than ever. She held on to bushes and strong tufts of grass, and climbed rapidly, rejoicing in the strength that it required. Down in a hollow, where the gorse stirred like a thick green mantle, she paused to recover breath. The utter loneliness of it filled her with pleasure. She stood perfectly still, letting the wind blow cold and strong in her face, and toss her hair. The sky was dull and grey, and vague thoughts swept through her . . . of all the Future . . . of her leaving this little island and going so far away—of all that she knew and loved—all that she wished to be. 'O I wish I was a poet,' she cried. . . . She walked home more slowly. Now that the excitement of climbing had left her, she felt tired and depressed. Clouds of dust whirled up the road. Dry particles of dust stung her face. She longed for the evening to come, yet almost dreaded it.

"When tea was over, Juliet went back to her room

FIRST LOVE

—tried to read and failed, and walked up and down—nine steps one way, nine steps another. The feeling soothed her.

“ She heard the front door bell ring, and knew that the guests had come, but stayed there until Margaret brought her down with great indignation. The room seemed full of people, but Juliet was not shy. She held her head a little higher than usual, and an expression of absolute indifference came into her face. David stood by the piano, unfastening his music case. She shook hands with him, and threw him a quick, keen glance of recognition. Then she curled herself up in a corner of the sofa and watched the people with amusement and interest. She liked to listen to little pieces of conversation, and create her idea of them. There was the usual amount of very second rate singing concerning ‘ Swallows ’ and ‘ Had I Known ’ ; Margaret played several nondescript pieces on the piano. At last David, himself, came. . . . She became utterly absorbed in the music. The room faded—the people faded. She saw only his sensitive, inspired face—felt only the rapture that held her fast. . . . Suddenly the music ceased. The tears poured down her face and she came back to reality. She put her handkerchief to her eyes, and when she looked around, became aware of the amused glances of the company, and heard the steady, almost prophetic-sounding voice of David’s Father—‘ That child is a born musician.’ . . . Mr. Wilberforce praised the boy and said, ‘ You might come and give my little daughter a few lessons and see if she has any talent.’ She never forgot their leave-taking. The wind was furious, and she stood on the verandah and saw David turn and smile at her before he passed out of sight.”

It must be remembered that this account of the meeting between Kathleen and Arnold Trowell was written in 1906, four years after the event. The event in the life of the girl of thirteen is transformed

into the experience of the young woman of seventeen. The Kathleen Beauchamp who was enraptured by the boy 'cellist was still a child. There is a contemporary record of her feelings in a little manuscript book of verses, called *Little Fronds*, which she composed on the voyage to England. They are quite naive ; nor do they show any particular promise. The gulf between the author of *Little Fronds* and the author of *Juliet* was immense ; so was the gulf between the girl-admirer of the boy musician on the voyage to England in 1903 and the distinctly sophisticated young lady on the voyage back in 1906.

Meanwhile, before the family left New Zealand, she persuaded her father to let her take 'cello lessons from old Mr. Trowell. Mr. Beauchamp, too, was musical ; his wife and Vera were pianists ; Kathleen of course, had taken desultory piano lessons from Mr. Parker. Her father was very proud of this new enthusiasm of hers, and bought her the expensive instrument and paid for her tuition. She threw all her suppressed ardour into learning to play ; it became her passion. She even dressed in brown, when she could, to " tone " with her 'cello. For the first time in her life she surrendered herself completely : she felt that she *was* a violoncello.

In January, 1903, the Beauchamp family sailed for England in the s.s. *Niwaru*, going the long route round the Horn. At the first port Kathleen wrote back to Arnold Trowell in Wellington—a letter so glowing, so gay, so vividly casting the picture of Mexicans against the gorgeous tapestry of their country—that he awoke to her existence as he never had awakened to it when she lived in Tinakori Road.





THE BEAUCHAMP FAMILY, 1903

Top Row—KATHLEEN, (SIR) HAROLD, OFFICERS OF S.S. NIWARU, VERA

Second Row—CHARLOTTE MARY, ANNIE BURNELL, CAPTAIN NIWARU,
BELL DYER

Third Row—LESLIE HERON, JEANNE

FIRST LOVE

He himself had never been further than the South Island of New Zealand. All his imaginative dreams were thrown out toward this new world that he was to discover ; she was already a part of it—who was already there. He identified her, as he read her descriptions, with this gorgeous Unknown. He thought all the outer world must be like that ; and she belonged to that world. Their correspondence continued, almost uninterrupted, for the next six years. Kathleen felt that “ he was the first person with whom she could really be herself.” Arnold felt that “ she really understood him.” They “ told each other everything.”

On the *Niwaru* the Beauchamps and the officers made a family party, of which record remains in a photograph. In the little budget of immature verses which she wrote on the voyage, we hear of a tiger-cub which the Chief kept during the day in No. 2 hold and exercised at night upon deck, to the alarm of the women-passengers. But of that incident apparently no memory remained nearly twenty years after, when she wrote to her father :

“ I envy you your voyage in the ‘ Aquitania.’ I must be a most interesting experience to travel in one of those huge liners—very different to the good old ‘ Star of New Zealand.’ Still I have a very soft corner in my heart for the ‘ Niwaru,’ for example. Do you remember how Mother used to enjoy the triangular-shaped pieces of toast for tea ? Awfully good they were, too, on a cold afternoon in the vicinity of the Horn. How I should love to make a long sea voyage again one of these days ! But I always connect such experiences with a vision of Mother in her little seal-skin jacket with the collar turned up. I can see her as I write.”

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

About six months after the Beauchamp girls, the Trowell boys sailed for Europe. They gave two farewell concerts in Wellington at the end of June, 1903, "before their departure from Wellington to prosecute their studies in Leipsic," as the enthusiastic press notice put it. But it was not to Leipsic that they went, but to Brussels.

“No indeed, for you are called sweet Kate, gentle Kate.”
—*Taming of the Shrew* (*K. M.’s Album*).

I

WHEN they arrived in England, after a month spent in visiting various relations, the Beauchamp girls entered Queen’s College in Harley Street in April, 1903. It was the natural place for them. Cousins of theirs were at the College. Probably it was regarded by Miss Swainson as the ideal of all that a “ladies’ college” at home should be. Certainly it represented the first great effort of Victorian England to meet with due decorum the new demand for the adequate education of women. It had been advanced; but advanced within the bounds of the Victorian tradition, to which the Beauchamp family adhered—the more loyally because they had to cling to it across a hemisphere.

The College had been founded in 1848. It owed its existence in part to the Governesses’ Benevolent Institution, and in part to the exertions of Frederick Denison Maurice, that pioneer of education. In the ’forties it was advanced indeed; but now, in 1903, by remaining faithful to itself, it had become a conservative academy, in need of drastic reorganisation, which was to overtake it some years after-

wards. But when the Beauchamp girls entered it, the heads—the old Principal, and the Lady Resident, Miss Croudace—were elderly, and the methods a survival from a past generation.

It had about forty boarders, “Compounders” they called themselves. They lived under the care of Miss Clara Phenessa Wood, in an old Harley Street house, No. 41, adjoining the College at No. 45. Long stone stairs and dark cold passages led to odd cubicle bedrooms tucked away in every available corner. From the top of No. 41 a narrow dark passage where the boots were kept, connected the boarding-house with No. 45, where the overflow boarders were accommodated in the top floor of the College Hall.

Miss Wood had undoubtedly been efficient in her day—but now, in the transition period, she clung to the traditions of the past—the traditions of her mid-Victorian prime, and to the girls, restless at the beginning of a new generation, her ways seemed stern beyond measure. Feeling this restlessness, yet not understanding its cause, “Woodie” was, perhaps even stricter than she had been twenty years previously; in addition, she was severely handicapped by impediments of advancing age.

There were two assistants besides the four maids: little “Robin,” Miss Robinson, rather like a spry bird. When, finally, she married one of the men who brought things to the back door, and thus escaped, the girls were glad for her; though her marriage turned out to be unlucky. When “Robin” left, Bell Dyer, the Beauchamp girls’ young aunt, took her place to help Miss Wood in the Hall. Bell

LONDON

Dyer was thought beautiful by those who knew her ; and she had ways, such as tucking a scarlet rose into her lovely red hair, which seemed exotic to the girls. Her hair was memorable : “ it was the colour of fresh fallen leaves, brown and red with a glint of yellow.” But in New Zealand this beauty had gone unappreciated. Bell had no chance for wide acquaintance there—in particular, no opportunity to meet eligible men. As Kathleen looked back, she felt sorry for Bell Dyer. When ships had come into Wellington harbour, and there were officers to dinner she remembered how Bell stood where the lamp threw a light on her beautiful hair. She was stationed in the Beauchamp home for a while, helping grandmother Dyer ; then she trained to be a nurse, but the threat of tuberculosis made nursing impossible. Now here she was in London as a sort of chaperon for the three girls ; yet she had her own life to consider.

The second assistant to “ Woodie ” was “ Hatchet,” old unlucky Miss Hatch, an inoffensive person who crept about her own unimportant business, but very much in the girls’ way for no fault of her own : her cubicle was one end of the only bath-room. It was partitioned off with half the bath-room window in Miss Hatch’s room ; and the girls were continually having to run up to see if “ Hatchet ” was in when they wanted to bathe. Not that she would be likely to spy out of her half window ; yet they somehow felt happier if they knew she was not there—though they didn’t mind if she was in when they practised—the piano being in the bath-room, too.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

The four maids had so much work caring for forty girls and a big house that they were harried and abrupt. One, a grim person responsible for washing the girls' hair, was notorious for leaving it soapy and stiff. It was a time when girls were still proud of their long, lovely hair, and it was still the fashion to wear it in a soft veil falling over the shoulders.

Such was the personnel of the boarding-house. The only other person responsible for the welfare and happiness of the boarders, apart from the academic staff, was the Lady Resident, old Miss Croudace, who belonged to the same régime and the same period as Miss Wood. She was assisted by the porter, Alfred, who became, in retrospect, at least, a quaint and legendary figure.

2

Every morning on their way to Queen's College, the "compounders" saw two figures slowly moving far down Wimpole Street, but they were too familiar to attract attention. Every morning for years they had gone down Wimpole Street to 45 Harley Street—one leaning upon the arm of the other. They were the Baker girls, May and Ida, daughters of Colonel Baker, a Welbeck Street doctor. They had been "compounders" at Queen's since Ida was seven.

The two were utterly unlike. May, crippled from an accident in infancy when Colonel Baker was stationed as army doctor at Burma, was alert, decisive; Ida Constance, tall, bending toward May, as May leaned upon her arm, moved with the

abstract air of one whose spirit is absent. It was not that she was dreaming, or living in some past or future episode real or imagined ; not that she lived in Burma while she walked down Wimpole Street. It was rather that she had not yet lived anywhere—that she waited in a state of suspension. Since there were in her the elements of a living, growing being, she herself was dimly conscious of this void. It may have been a vague awareness—unfocussed as yet—a diffused hunger of the soul. She was unself-conscious, and almost wholly undeveloped at fourteen ; but she turned, magnetised, towards the vitality in certain strong personalities. Through them, when she could make the connection, she had momentary glimpses ; in those instants she found fulfilment ; but the contact gone, she lapsed again into abstraction.

There was a time, later, when she and Katherine rode together in taxis which Ida provided as a convenience and a luxury ; and Katherine—looking up through the gloom to the bright little taxi mirror—saw Ida's anxious eyes staring out, dark from her white face, and cried : " Oh ! Your face looks like a lemon ! " The pale oval seemed to hang suspended in the dark taxi, and she was frightened of it—or not—as the moment seized her. Sometimes she was afraid to look. Yet she forced her chin up until her eyes met the mirror, just as she forced herself to drain every experience—lovely and fearful—to take its full meaning into her until she had passed through it ; and all the while a part of her was looking on, aloof—seeing it as a writer—recognising it as " material." Years afterward, in *The*

Daughters of the Late Colonel, she found use for this moment :

“And Constantia, pale as a lemon in all that darkness, said in a frightened whisper, ‘Done what, Jug?’”

Katherine always felt she “could write endless stories about her.”

At other times, all was taken for granted. The tall girl, with a mane of fair hair to her waist, solicitous of the sister, was rather like a nun, with her abstract air—like a Sister of Charity. She had promised her mother that she would care for May ; and Ida would have given anything for her mother’s sake—understanding, as she looked on, her mother’s protective love for May, and May’s return of passionate devotion.

Mrs. Baker was the centre of their home ; she might have been said to be the whole meaning of it during the time the girls were in the primary school at Queen’s. Dr. Baker was “difficult,” but his wife seemed to understand him, and he to depend completely upon her. In her relation to the children she was unusual in her day. Most English homes of their station kept on the nurse, and took a governess ; their friends the Paynes, whose father was a physician in Welbeck Street, seldom saw their parents ; but Mrs. Baker, from preference, filled both positions herself, besides managing the house. She dismissed the nurse when the children were still small, and she sat with them, teaching and reading to them and kept the circle very close. Each of the four had a special need of her—her husband from his tempera-

LONDON

ment, May to supplant her physical disability, Ida to fill her indefinable seeking. The brother was still a little child.

During the January holidays of 1913, about the time that the Beauchamp family sailed from Wellington "home" to England, Mrs. Baker went with her children for a holiday in the country. Before the January term opened again, she had died from typhoid fever.

3

It was curious, since they were to be life-long friends, that it was Ida Baker (then living in a little high room at the college, since her mother's death) who happened to be the Monitor called to take the three Beauchamp girls to their room. They climbed to to the top of No. 41, fumbled through the dark boot passage, on to the top floor of No. 45, above the French room, overlooking the Mews. It was next to the bath-room, convenient, if not the perfect setting, for Kathleen's practising.

The girls found their room curtained into three divisions, but since they were sisters the curtains were not drawn to make the usual cubicles. Each girl, in her division of the room, had a bed, a washstand and mirror, and a wall space which she might decorate to her taste with photographs and postcards.

To these new girls it was thrillingly novel, at first—though they disdained to show it. Their air was considered critical; in fact, even scornful; they had their mother's hauteur, then, with her fastidiousness; and their attitude toward the college surroundings had much to do with their popularity later. Vera

was grown-up and sedate, as she would always be ; Marie, glowing and cheerful, still dressed like her younger sister. She was so dissimilar in expression though in contour like her—very plump. Kathleen's bright look was often lost in a dark brooding ; but she could be madly gay—in a whirl of irresponsible happiness ; and she gave herself up to this mood now—consumed with delight in the experience and the fascinating chance of creating a new life, appearing as she wished to appear among those who never had known her as Kass Beauchamp.

She threw off the big soft black velour hat which her father had just bought for a guinea to replace the Wellington sailor-straw with the Swainson school band ; she threw off the nautical coat, with its pipings of red, and its brass buttons down the front and on the shoulders. Dressed in a high-necked white blouse with long sleeves protruding at the shoulders like wings, and the dark skirt pinched in at a small waist, she leaned out of the window to look over London. How often in the next three years she leaned out over Mansfield Mews. Something seemed to fly from her, escaped and free as she listened to the far-away London sounds : hurdy-gurdys, rumbling of hansom cabs, muffled call of coal and flower vendors. When it rained, she spread a towel on the sill, crying, " Don't bother me, girls : I'm going to have a mood ! "

I

" Away beyond the line of dark houses there is a sound like the call of the sea after a storm—passionate, solemn, strong. I lean far out of the window in the warm, still night air. Down below, in the Mews, the little lamp is singing a silent song. It is the only glow

LONDON

of light in all this darkness. Men swilling the carriages with water ; their sharp, sudden exclamations ; the faint, thin cry of a very young child, the chiming of a bell from the church close by—these are the only other sounds, impersonal, vague, intensely agitating. . . .”

II

“ I lean out of my window. The dark houses stare at me and above them a great sweep of sky. Where it meets the houses there is a strange lightness—a suggestion, a promise.

“ Silence now in the Mews below. The cry of the child is silent, even the chiming of the bell is less frequent, no longer so persistent. But away beyond the line of the dark houses there is a sound like the call of the sea after a storm. It is assuming gigantic proportions. Nearer and nearer it comes—a vast, incontrollable burst of sound.

“ And in its essence it is the faint, thin cry of the very young child. It is the old, old cry for the moon that rises eternally into the great vastness . . . ”

This first time she looked down over Mansfield Mews, it was mid-April. The smoky haze was like bloom on fruit : it had so much of purple and yellow—not mere grey, as she had supposed. New Zealand air was never like this : but keen and clear—or opalescent, tinged with rose, opaque. “ Home,” London, was infinitely more exciting. And how strange to find seasons reversed : spring instead of autumn !

In the “ novel,” *Juliet*, begun three years later, before she left Queen’s, she described (with minor variations) her first hour at No. 41 :

“ Juliet looked curiously around her room. So this was where she was to spend the next three years—three years. It did not look inviting. She noticed

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

two texts ornamented with foxgloves and robins . . . and decided that they must come down. The three large windows looked out upon the Mews, below—the houses built all around in a square. She wondered who would share this sanctuary. Some strange girl, stiff and prim who would torture the walls with pictures of dogs and keep a hockey stick in the corner. ‘Heaven forbid,’ she thought. . . . How strange the night was. She was close in London—glorious thought. Three years of study before her. And then all life to plunge into. The others were actually gone, now. She was to meet total strangers. She could be just as she liked. They had never known her before—oh, what a comfort to know that every minute saw the others farther away from her! ‘I suppose I am preposterously unnatural,’ she thought and smiled. Then the porter brought in her large boxes, and behind him Miss Mackay hovered, and told Juliet she must have everything unpacked before bedtime. It was quite one of the old customs.

“Does the glory of England rest upon old customs? She rather fancied it did—when to start overcoats and when to stop fires—have boiled eggs for Sunday supper and cold lunches. She knelt down on the floor and unstrapped her luggage. From the pocket of her great coat, she drew out David’s picture. . . . ‘Dearest and ever dear,’ she said. . . . ‘I feel that life is helping me write now.’

“ . . . When she had undressed, she suddenly longed to write just a few lines of her impressions. So she slipped into her kimono and drew out her notebook.

“‘If I could retain my solitude,’ she wrote, ‘I should be profoundly happy. The knowledge that sooner or later I shall be hampered with desirable acquaintances takes away much of the glamour. The great thing to do is to start as I mean to continue—never for one moment to be other than myself, as I long to be—and I never yet have been except with David’”

LONDON

The "self" that she "longed to be" was not yet consistent, or constant, indeed, but undeveloped like the rest of her. Katherine at fourteen was not the lovely woman she was to become seven years later. As Juliet said of her face in the novel, "the impression which it gives is not by any means strictly beautiful"; but there were glimpses of future loveliness—in her changing expression; watching hazel eyes that altered suddenly from dreaminess to sparkling attention; and in a clean-cut, sensitive mouth. Her expression altered as frequently as did her handwriting. One who knew her well could instantly recognise her state by the appearance of her page: when she was happy, the letters leaped upright, tall and firm; when she was dispirited or ill, they crawled, indistinctly; when she wrote excitedly, they streaked across the page in curves like shorthand, the letters unformed; only when she was desperate or angry, she wrote with clear distinctness, small and sharp. Her handwriting, that first college year, and her notebooks, were the despair of her "sponsor," Evelyn Payne, who wrote precisely, like printed script, while Kathleen's pen streaked across the page at lightning speed to keep pace with her thoughts, her principal mark of punctuation being always the dash. But Evelyn found herself unable to impress her cousin who was going her own way, evolving standards for herself—showing a scornful pride when these standards were threatened.

Consequently she was not popular. With her chosen friends, her manner was eager and precipitate, but from most of the girls she seems to have

held herself aloof somewhat from the hauteur of her own family, and because she had become withdrawn even within its circle.

The impression which she created upon those about her varied considerably. Ida, when she came to know her, saw the promise of future loveliness ; but "Mimi," another of her friends, slim and quick—"her eyebrows raised, her eyes half veiled" saw her as "'a stocky build'. Her appearance (she said in retrospect) did not *attract* me. She interested me very much, but that's different."

Yet part of this aloofness was drawn from these very differences in temperament and attitudes of her acquaintances and friends. She exulted in watching the enacting of the play : far more deeply thrilling to her at that time to watch than to act. Just as in *Carnation* (her one story of Queen's College, though she had intended to write many, and though many of her later characters were based on the girls she had known there), "fanciful Katie" watched all of it whirling about her, making fascinating patterns : exotic "Eve," who was Vere Bartrick-Baker ("Mimi") ; "Francie," Frances Maurice, grand-daughter of the Founder, who was for ever inking herself ; Sylvia, her cousin, with her innocent, virginal look sheltered in her calyx of light reddish hair ; Ida, about whom she "could write endless books."

So to those who first made her acquaintance, Kathleen Beauchamp seemed very reserved. Few "knew" her. She was still living a life of which they could guess nothing ; for she did not immediately become attached to London in spite of the

fascination it had for her. At times, in those first months, she turned ardently back toward New Zealand, "the little Colonial" again :

"April 1st.—To-day the weather has been very dull and gray. I woke this morning at four and since then I have heard nothing save the sounds of traffic, and feel nothing except a great longing to be back in the country, among the woods and gardens and the meadows and the chorus of the Spring Orchestra. All day during my work, I have found myself dreaming of the woods, and the little secret nooks that have been mine and mine, only, for many years. A girl passed under my window this morning, selling primroses. I bought great bunches of them, and untied their tight chains, and let them stretch their poor little tired clamped selves in a sky-blue dish that had been filled with primroses every year. But they were not like country primroses. As I bent over them, their weary, pale faces looked into mine with the same depth of wondering, strange, fearful perplexities that I have sometimes seen on the face of a little child. It was as though Spring had entered my room. But with her wings broken, and soiled, and her song quiet—very quiet. This evening I have sat in my chair with my reading lamp turned low, and given myself up to thoughts of the years that have passed. Like a strain of minor music they have surged across my heart, and the memory of them, sweet and fragrant as the perfume of my flowers has sent a strange thrill of comfort through my tired brain."

It is too deliberately romantic, too manifestly a chosen attitude to be itself evidence of more than indulgence in a mood. But since all save one of her stories in the College magazine have New Zealand for their setting, the nostalgia was real beneath the artifice of the writer to be.

Concealed somewhere within her, Ida had a fund of unfocussed ability ; but it always needed some personal devotion to call it forth. Because she had been at Queen's for six years, she had been allowed to compete for the Professors' scholarship, although she was in fact a year too young to be eligible. Evelyn Payne, remembering the fascination which questions on the Doomsday Book had for Professor Cramb, the examiner, reminded Ida of this subject. The expected questions were asked, and Ida won the scholarship by three marks. That was the exploit of a prodigy. But Ida's abilities were real. That they lapsed into a kind of dream under the spell which Kathleen was unwittingly to exercise upon her was a charge made against Kathleen in her college days.

Kathleen herself was to ponder this matter on more than one occasion, in later years, for it had been she who made the first direct advance—she who suggested that they *choose* each other. "Let's be friends," she said, and for the moment startled the dreaming Ida out of her void.

"*Be* friends!" thought Ida. "But you can't just *be* friends. A friend is something you become!"

For a long time she hadn't known Marie and Kathleen Beauchamp apart. They dressed alike : both wore the big soft black velour hats, flowing ties, and blue nautical coats. They were "the Paynes' cousins." Her friend was Marian Creelman, a Canadian girl with a fund of keen humour ; and Ida, "looking for the perfect thing," thought to find it in her—until Marian returned to Canada. There had been a few indefinite "signs" ; a book of

verse which she found upon Kathleen's bed and remarked upon ; a glimpse that Kathleen had of her ardour over the cool leaves unfolding above ivy-twined trunks in the Square. But she took less for granted than the Beauchamp girls did, until—meeting them on the stairs one day, during the next term, she realised their casual acceptance of her when Vera said sweetly, *a propos* of friendship, “ But we *are* your friends. We're friends already.”

Even so early the girls adopted the names by which they were to be known in after years. As they sat on either side of their name-carved wooden desk Kathleen passed to Ida a slip with huge leaping letters—*inches high*: KATHERINE MANSFIELD. “ My grandmother's name,” she added, “ and my *nom-de-plume*.” She did, in fact, sign many of her Queen's College stories (appearing each term in the *Queen's College Magazine*) K. M. Beauchamp. And Ida kept the slip until after that name had become universally known. Ida's mother had been Katherine Moore, and Ida had thought to adopt this name herself ; but Kathleen, having chosen Katherine, found for her another—Lesley—which suited her, and did as well ; so she became thereafter “ L. M.,” to Kathleen and her friends.

It may have been that New Year—it may have been another—when the two girls, Kathleen and Ida, roamed over London to find a church holding a midnight service, because Kathleen longed to go. The mysticism which burned in her, later, with so fine a flame was then crudely flaring. She was drawn by the mystery of Christianity ; a crucifix hung between the two Watts prints over her bed.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

The New Year, itself, had always a poignant significance for her. She felt that if a friend wished her "a happy new year," that happiness was sure to follow. She felt that when the bells rang, a gate opened—and she could nearly—just walk away. With her keen awareness of the elusive and intangible, many things came to have for her this "special" significance of good or evil. Like "holding thumbs" for luck, when something was at stake; like the evil of Wednesdays, and the danger of Octobers. But the mystery of the New Year she could—and did—share with Ida during the early years :

"The ghost of L. M. ran through my heart, her hair flying, very pale, with dark, startled eyes."

And there were New Years later when she shared the mystery with her husband.

This first New Year at Queen's College she made—as she always made the New Year—a turning point in her consciousness. The same night, after the service, she wrote of it; but she already was living beyond the immediate event :

(Jan. 1, 1904) "It is twelve o'clock. All the bells in the village churches are pealing. Another year has come. Now, at the entrance of this New Year, my dearest, I propose to begin my book. It will not be at all regal or dramatic, but just all that I have done. You who are so far away know so little of what happens to me, and it is so selfish of me not to tell you more. I have just returned from a midnight service. It was very, very beautiful and solemn. The air outside was cold and bracing, and the Night was a beautiful thing. Over all the woods and the meadows—Nature had

LONDON

tenderly flung a veil to protect from the frost, but the trees stood out, dark and beautiful against the clear, starry sky. The Church looked truly very fit for God's house to-night. It looked so strong, so hospitable, so invincible. It was only during the silent prayer that I made up my mind to write this. I mean this year to try and be a different person, and I wait at the end of this Year to see how I have kept all the vows that I have made to-night. So much happens in a year. One may mean so well and do so little.

"I am writing this by the light of a tiny peep of gas, and I have only got on a dressing gown. So décolleté. I am so tired, I think I must go to bed. To-morrow is the first of January. What a wonderful and what a lovely world this is. I thank God to-night that I *am*."

" . . . Nobody saw it, I felt, as I did. My mind was just like a squirrel. I gathered and gathered and hid away, for the long ' winter ' when I should re-discover all this treasure—and if anybody came close I scuttled up the tallest, darkest tree and hid in the branches."—*Journal.*

I

THE Giraffe Hole was on the floor below the Beauchamp girls' room. How often the boarders leaned over the railing to look down that large square opening to see if their professor had come yet—to watch the professors cross to the Professors' Room. It was the personalities of these eminent men—each distinguished in his own field—which drew the girls to class and which made them work—when they worked at all : for while " Woodie's " rules were strict, the College had no regulations. Responsibility for attending lectures rested upon themselves : they might wander in and out of classes, or cut them, or go unprepared. Twice a year—at the end of the Michaelmas term for the professors, and at the end of the Easter term for external examiners—they wrote papers. But the *habit* of study was not required at Queen's, as Kathleen had reason, later, to regret :

" I was thinking yesterday of my *wasted, wasted* early girlhood. My college life, which is such a vivid and

QUEEN'S COLLEGE

detailed memory in one way, might never have contained a book or a lecture. I lived in the girls, the professor, the big, lovely building, the leaping fires in winter and the abundant flowers in summer. The views out of the windows, all the pattern that was—weaving. Nobody saw it, I felt, as I did. My mind was just like a squirrel. I gathered and gathered and hid away, for that long 'winter' when I should rediscover all this treasure—and if anybody came close I scuttled up the tallest, darkest tree and hid in the branches. And I was so awfully fascinated in watching Hall Griffin and all his tricks—thinking about him as he sat there, his private life, what he was like as a man, etc., etc. (He told us he and his brother once wrote an enormous poem called the Epic of the Hall Griffins.) Then it was only at rare intervals that something flashed through all this busyness, something about Spenser's Faery Queen or Keats's Isabella and the Pot of Basil, and those flashes were always when I disagreed flatly with H.G. and wrote in my notes: 'This man is a fool.' And Cramb, wonderful Cramb! The figure of Cramb was enough, he was 'history' to me. Ageless and fiery, eating himself up again and again, very fierce at what he had seen, but going a bit blind because he had looked so long. Cramb striding up and down, filled me up to the brim. I couldn't write down Cramb's thunder. I simply wanted to sit and hear him. Every gesture, every stopping of his walk, all his tones and looks are as vivid to me as though it were yesterday—but of all he said I only remember phrases—'He sat there and his wig fell off'—'Anne Bullen, a lovely *pure* creature stepping out of her quiet door into the light and clamour,' and looking back and seeing the familiar door shut upon her, with a little click as it were,—final.

"But what coherent account could I give of the history of English Literature? And what of English History? None. When I think in *dates* and *times* the wrong people come in—the right people are missing.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

. . . But why didn't I listen to the old Principal who lectured on Bible History twice a week instead of staring at his face that was very round, a dark red colour with a kind of bloom on it and covered all over with little red veins with endless tiny tributaries that ran even up his forehead and were lost in his bushy white hair. He had tiny hands, too, puffed up, purplish, shining under the stained flesh. I used to think, looking at his hands—he will have a stroke and die of paralysis. . . . They told us he was a very learned man, but I could not help seeing him in a double-breasted frock-coat, a large pseudo-clerical pith helmet, a large white handkerchief falling over the back of his neck, standing and pointing out with an umbrella a probable site of a probable encampment of some wandering tribe, to his wife, an elderly lady with a threatening heart who had to go everywhere in a basket-chair arranged on the back of a donkey, and his two daughters, in thread gloves and sand shoes—smelling faintly of some anti-mosquito mixture.

“As he lectured I used to sit, building his house, peopling it—filling it with Americans, ebony and heavy furniture—cupboards like tiny domes and tables with elephants' legs presented to him by grateful missionary friends. . . . I never came into contact with him but once, when he asked any young lady in the room to hold up her hand if she had been chased by a wild bull, and as nobody else did, I held up mine (though of course I hadn't). ‘Ah,’ he said, ‘I am afraid you do not count. You are a little savage from New Zealand’—which was a trifle exacting, for it must be the rarest thing to be chased by a wild bull up and down Harley Street, Wimpole Street, Welbeck Street, Queen Anne, round and round Cavendish Square. . . .

“And why didn't I learn French with M. Huguenet? What an opportunity missed! What has it not cost me! He lectured in a big narrow room that was painted all over—the walls, door, and window-frames,

QUEEN'S COLLEGE

a grey shade of mignonette green. The ceiling was white, and just below it there was a frieze of long looped chains of white flowers. On either side of the marble mantelpiece a naked small boy staggered under a big platter of grapes that he held above his head. Below the windows, far below there was a stable court paved in cobble stones, and one could hear the faint clatter of carriages coming out or in, the noise of water gushing out of a pump into a big pail—some youth, clumping about and whistling. The room was never very light, and in summer M.H. liked the blinds to be drawn half-way down the window. . . . He was a little fat man."

That is a perfect picture of Cramb, the disinterested and unregarded scholar, upon whom a sudden blaze of national repute descended in the early years of the Great War ; and then he died. But the rapt attention which Kathleen gave him—though not his lectures—was peculiar to herself. "Nobody saw it, as she did." And in fact the effect of Cramb's lectures upon his class was, occasionally at least, not wholly different from the effect of M. Hugenet's lectures upon his, as described in *Carnation* :

"He began, and most of the girls fell forward, over the desks, their heads on their arms, dead at the first shot."

On one such occasion, it is remembered, the beautiful Isobel Creelman attracted the notice of the short-sighted Cramb ; and to his question what she thought she was doing, replied with calm impertinence : "I'm closing the ink-well to keep the ink from evaporating."

A characteristic story of Cramb is told by one of

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Kathleen's contemporaries. He was describing to a very dull girl the impression made upon him when he read *The Arabian Nights* for the first time. "Didn't you," he said in his fierce Scottish accent, "when you first read *The Arabian Nights* imagine you saw a genie coming out of every jar or bottle?" "No," said the hapless creature. Cramb made a desperate pause: then gathered himself together and, with one of his rare, exquisite smiles, said: "Do you mind supposing that you did?"

By her own confession Kathleen learnt little under Cramb; and the records bear it out. She was fourth or fifth from the end in a class of forty in her first year. It was no better with Hall Griffin—another distinguished scholar. In the English language examination she was among the last five; and even in an English composition examination in Easter, 1904, she was only seventh among fifteen. Her deep personal interest in Walter Rippmann, though he singled her out as a girl with a destiny, did no more than make her progress in German erratic.

In her journal for July, 1904—when she was fifteen—is a careful list of her recent reading. It serves to remind us that she was a schoolgirl still.

Books I have read.

June, 1904.

All books which I have enjoyed are marked thus *

*LIFE AND LETTERS OF BYRON, I. Thomas Moore.
B., J. 17; F., J. 17.

*AFTERMATH. J. Lane Allen. B., J. 17; F., J. 17.

*DOLLY DIALOGUES. Anthony Hope. B., J. 17; F.,
J. 18.

POEMS. Jean Ingelow. B., J. 13; F., J. 14.

QUEEN'S COLLEGE

- *LIFE AND LETTERS OF BYRON, II. Thomas Moore.
B., J. 17; F., J. 18.
*HOW MUSIC DEVELOPED. Henderson. July 16.
*THE CHOIR INVISIBLE. J. Lane Allen. July 18.
THE CAPTAIN'S DAUGHTER. Swen Ovedor. (?) July 20.
*LIFE OF ROMNEY. Rowley Cleve. (?) July 15-20.
*A KENTUCKY CARDINAL. J. Lane Allen. July 23.
LIFE AND LETTERS OF BYRON, III. Thomas Moore.
*RUPERT OF HENTZAU. Anthony Hope. July 24.
*MY JAPANESE WIFE. Clive Holland.
A JAPANESE MARRIAGE. Douglas Sladen.
CAPTAIN PAMPHILE. Alexander Dumas.
VILETTE. Charlotte Bronte.
THE HEART OF ROME. F. Marion Crawford.
POE'S POEMS.*

Music I have studied.

- CAPRICE. Noel Johnson. July 13-14.
WARUM. David Popper. Begun J. 13.
LE DESIR. Servais. Begun J. 14.
VARIAT. SYMPHON. Boellmann. Begun J. 15.

Writing I have done.

- FRANZ (Prose). 13-17.
POEM. 16th.
ALONE (Poetry). 14th.

Schoolgirlish, too, were her arguments in the College debating club, of which the proceedings are amusingly and candidly described by a critic in the *College Magazine*.

"The Proposer gave a speech proposing; the Opposer gave a speech opposing. Two more speeches were made—one for each side, usually by the dearest friend. After this, fell an awful silence finally broken by some courageous individual, venturing to remark—more silence. Then a few opinions uttered in hesitating or questioning accents. Another terrible

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

silence, broken by the announcement that voting would be taken. Voters voted according to whether they were more friendly with the Proposer or Opposer."

If the last sentence be true, as probably in the main it was, the account of a debate in February, 1904, where Kathleen and Ida were directly opposed to one another, has an interest beyond that of her arguments, though these for the first time have a recognisable touch of her own courage and individuality. The motion which Kathleen proposed—derived apparently from *The Times*—was this :

"That pastors and masters, parents and guardians, commentators and cranks have done their best to spoil the taste of Shakespeare for us by making it a duty instead of a pleasure."

When we remember the passionate delight of Katherine Mansfield's rediscovery of Shakespeare in after-years, the report of her speech takes life. She was speaking of her own experience ; and we can recapture something of her girlish vehemence. She is already the rebel against the decorous curriculum of the College.

"K. M. B., proposing said : 'When the average boy goes to school, he is plunged into the most magnificent of Shakespeare's works. If a person has a tendency early in life to be literary, the very idea of being *forced* to learn Shakespeare deadens the sense of the appreciation of the beautiful—a true schoolboy never appreciated the beautiful at all, so he considers Shakespeare in the same way as anything else that is forced upon him. The most glorious pieces in

QUEEN'S COLLEGE

Shakespeare have been read and re-read, quoted and misquoted by cranks and commentators till they have lost all true significance. There is so short a step from the sublime to the ridiculous ! ”

“ A foreigner said to me, ‘ Nearly all foreigners love and appreciate Shakespeare as much as you English.’

“ ‘ Why is this ? ’ I asked.

“ ‘ Oh, of course we do not read Shakespeare till we have had some experience of life—Shakespeare is not for a child.’ I felt a little crushed !

“ It is impossible for a student to form an original opinion for himself, for he is always more or less biassed by what he has been forced to learn in his youth. Why should Shakespeare be employed in schools as a spelling book or reading book ? Of a surety this is what happens when we come to consider how we are recommended to the Clarendon Press as an authority to find the correct spelling of the word ‘ cousin ’ in 1680. After laborious references to other plays of Shakespeare we have to take recourse to the researches of a certain Dr. Faulkner, folio ix, end of sect. v ! The predominating element in a teacher is duty. The satisfaction of finding that a pupil can quote 50 lines of Shakespeare without faltering is to them far greater than finding that a pupil appreciates the intrinsic value of the speech. Even the divine Shakespeare himself, would writhe in his grave should he hear a fat, podgy little boy roll off a long farewell (with appropriate or seemingly appropriate gesticulations). Why should Shakespeare be made the bogey of the schoolroom ? ”

“ Ida Baker, opposing the motion said : ‘ At home you are first of all given a story book with several tales from Shakespeare, perhaps illustrated and so you learn the story of the plays. Later, when you are older, you discover that Shakespeare made the people talk and to gratify your curiosity to know how they talked—what sort of things your favourite hero or heroine said, you read the plays, and with a certain amount of extra pleasure (though of course you didn’t

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

realise it then) in watching the developments. That is the result of forcing at home. At school it is stronger. If a play is chosen for that term, you know you are doomed to learn by heart at least five or six long speeches. But when you are older, it is wonderful what pleasure you get in finding how immense, how vast, is the meaning which you failed to appreciate when you first read it. You may suggest that however good it may be to force children to read Shakespeare, yet it would be better to leave them alone. But, I say, if that were so, half, if not more of the children would never open a Shakespeare at all ! Finally, I offer my deepest gratitude to all or any who taught me to read Shakespeare.'

"K. M. B. summing up, said : ' In reply . . . unless we followed the advice of others, we should choose by covers and gilt edges. If you have a boy to stay in the holidays he would choose to go to see " The Orchard " sooner than a play of Shakespeare—and why ? Because at school they have made it a duty instead of a pleasure ! ' "

The voting is eloquent. For Kathleen's motion there was cast one solitary vote. For Ida's opposition there were twenty-one.

It is an index of her isolation. During the remaining year and a half which she spent at Queen's, she never again took an official part in a debate.

The " big lovely building " which she remembered so glowingly in *Carnation* meant much to " the little Colonial." The architecture of Harley Street was not a thing to be taken for granted by one from a country where the oldest houses belonged to the 1850's. It was the tradition which half-consciously she reabsorbed, and in which she found her own peculiar delight. Her native delicacy and fastidiousness, the natural and exquisite grace which in later

QUEEN'S COLLEGE

life quietly set her apart, found sustenance in the spacious Waiting Room with its beautiful ceiling ; the Library, with the familiar portrait of Frederick Maurice, the Founder, hanging above the fireplace ; the carved Library table with the Chaucer inscription along its edge ; the great lower stairway with its graceful fluted balustrade. She drank it in.

Even the vista down the Giraffe Hole belonged to an earlier age. Perhaps its potentialities were half-realised on the nights of the innumerable school dances in the Pfeiffer Hall. These consumed a surprising amount of emotion and surplus energy, considering that they were merely school affairs. Except on rare occasions, the girls had only each other to dance with ; but the lights, the dresses, the fires flaring on either side of the Hall, the bonbons thrown down the Giraffe Hole by special friends to special friends—all made an exciting, a thrilling ball.

2

The girls' special precinct at College was the Bun Shop, down below, where administrators seldom intruded. It was a cosy cave, dark, warm from the built-in stove, with square wooden tables, carved by passing generations, and a notice board for messages. Friendly old Mrs. Brown, with her bun-counter across one end, presided unobtrusively.

Here Kathleen might meet her best friend of the moment, or go with one of the boarders—Ruth Herrick, another New Zealander, a fiery, long-limbed girl, with a mane of fair hair flung back

with quick impatience as she charged about. Ruth Herrick was a pianist, too, and they often practised together, and went to recitals at Queen's Hall.

For a while, Kathleen's best friend was Vere Bartrick-Baker, "Mimi," with her cool little voice, and her detached way of speaking. Both Ruth and "Mimi" seemed to her so much more awakened, more sophisticated than most of the girls at Queen's. "Mimi" was one of the three girls (the others being Ida Baker, and Gwen Rouse, a girl from Lancashire—with whom Kathleen felt she "could be herself"). She remembers Kathleen as "definitely most enthusiastic in temperament, even to the extent of stammering very slightly from sheer excitement when much roused; and, of course," she adds, "the 'cello was the great thing. She was to play in London and appear as a 'cellist. She gave me a solo performance on the landing outside the 'Giraffe Hole.' . . . I thought it extremely good, but should have done the same, no doubt, if it had been extremely bad."

Except for practising music, there was not much for the girls to do together *except* sit and talk; yet when the mothers heard that some of them sat in the dark shadowy niches of the Hall, holding hands, they were indignant. "Of course," writes "Mimi," "K. M. and I had long discussions over Tolstoi, Maeterlinck, Ibsen in the lower corridor. We came an hour early for them, and were suspected of immorality. Miss Croudace was *stupefied* when, asking what we talked about, I told her."

Girls under eighteen were not allowed out of College bounds. When they went to the Gardens

QUEEN'S COLLEGE

near Regent's Park occasionally, for tennis (which was their one game), they marched in a "crocodile," led by Miss Hatch.

Kathleen's real escape from this confined and decorous life was through her music; and the escape was not merely spiritual, but physical. "Guardy" (short for Guardian)—De Monk Beauchamp, their second cousin, whom the father had deputed to keep an eye on the girls in London—was the Secretary of the London Academy of Music; and Kathleen persuaded him to recommend that she should be allowed to take extra lessons there. Manifestly her lessons at the London Academy were to be the counterpart of Arnold Trowell's study at the Brussels Conservatoire. And Kathleen, and Ida, who went with her—she for violin, Kathleen for 'cello—referred to it as "The Conservatory."

Even Charles Palliser—her father's old New Zealand friend, now a London bank manager, whose daughter Eileen was at Queen's with the Beauchamp girls—took them to concerts at Queen's Hall. He was lovingly remembered by Kathleen ever after :

" . . . a tall man with a pointed grey beard, Irish eyes and a voice like the sky at evening. His name is Charles Palliser, and he was a love of my salad days."

One imagines that Kathleen decided the direction of these expeditions. Music was everything to her, then. It was not music for its own sake, exactly, but music as the atmosphere of romantic love, the path to the garden of the Hesperides. Music linked her with Arnold Trowell; and the bond with Arnold Trowell was the bond with genius, freedom, rapture,

Bohemia. Music was for her then a girl's anticipation of the secret of life, or of that final wisdom to which Tchehov gave perfect utterance, when he felt, in listening to music, that "all things are forgiven, and it would be strange not to forgive."

The seed of this realisation was in Kathleen's absorption in music, which was indeed so complete at this time, that afterward she almost persuaded herself that there had been a choice to be made between music and letters, and that she had chosen letters. It was not so. But music was to her, then, a symbol of Art in its vaguely felt significance: it was an earnest of that attitude of all-comprehending significance of which Art at its highest is the sacrament, and of which her own art was finally to be the expression.

She was impatient to excel, to be at the inmost heart of music. Under the Queen's College 'cello master, Professor Hahn, she felt that her progress was too slow. So she became a familiar figure, in her big dark coat and soft black hat, carrying the cumbersome canvas-covered 'cello, hurrying down Princess Street in the fog to the Academy, followed by the tall striding Ida and a violin case; or flying back in the evening when the high bowls of yellow light seemed to her so gay and blissful. Often they went early to concerts at Queen's Hall and waited for the topmost gallery seats—Kathleen, rapt, absorbed in the programme; Ida, watching her lean over the gallery rails, with her "live hands taking and giving the music":

"Her quick, life-giving hands—so light and sure in their movements—passing over things, hardly touch-

QUEEN'S COLLEGE

ing or moving, but leaving them *alive* (Ida described it). Later, coming into her room early in the morning—just a glance all around the room, like a greeting, then moving lightly around—a sure quick almost loving touch to the flowers—the mantelpiece, her writing table—sometimes just a fraction of an inch closer or further away—and the room lived and breathed—ever so quietly—and smiled as if it was *quite* sure you understood—might even have a little joke with you.”

At certain hours during the day—the music room at Queen’s being unoccupied—Kathleen was able to slip down unnoticed in spite of the bulky ’cello, and Ida looked for her there and sat while she practised. Just as in “Katie’s voice, there was a certain deep sad note which made Ida catch her breath” (and Kathleen “used” it, too, sometimes)—so in her playing there was a note, a strain, a whole phrase, an entire movement, which to Ida was a glimpse of another plane of being—not merely the fulfilment she sought in “the perfect thing,” but a transporting—a vision. She felt, hearing it, that certain phrases were the sheer inspiration of one “living on a higher plane,” one who momentarily succeeded in illuminating, disclosing her own exalted state. And in bright flashes, like the rocketing of stars, Ida felt she knew this state of being.

What Ida gave to Katherine was a deep love, a complete devotion, constant and enduring; and for Katherine, also, the bond was life-long. If at times she seemed to fling herself violently free, she always acknowledged the bond. If to Ida those brief years together at Queen’s seemed a time of

rapture and enchantment, there were moments when Katherine herself more than half believed it. Ten years afterward she lent herself to an effort to recapture the past :

“ . . . I kept seeing the Squares with their butterfly leaves just ready to fly. We (Ida and I) met near the old haunts—Queen Anne Street—and walked in one of the little lanes and short cuts that we know so well—side by side, talking. ‘ Let me tie your veil,’ and I stop ; and she ties it and we walk on again . . . ”

Spring leaves and autumn leaves in a London Square : the tender green and the tender gold. These in their evanescence and their beauty reminded Kathleen of her college days and her college friendship. In one of the moments when she “ saw Ida as a character in a book ”—while she was writing *Maata*—she pictured her again as the tall schoolgirl, clumsy and rapt, breaking from the decorous procession through the London Squares to catch in her clapped hands a falling, fluttering leaf—“ a happy month ” :

“ They did not fall like leaves—they fell like feathers—fluttering and floating from the trees that lined the road. . . . Who was it used to say that every leaf you caught meant a happy month ? Rhody (Ida) of course. She saw Rhody, the tall school girl, break from the ‘ crocodile ’ when they walked in the park, and run after the leaves with big, far too big gestures, as though she expected the whole tree to fall into her arms. Rhody used to keep the leaves in her Bible, and take them out and hold them up to the light and gaze at them in Scripture lessons. And she always said she knew each one apart. Well—if she said so—she did. Just like her.”

QUEEN'S COLLEGE

That picture of Ida more than any other remained with Katherine as a mark of the past. It was symbolic : of her rapt devotion, of the contrast between her awkwardness and the delicate, elusive thing she tried to grasp ; of the happiness she seemed, at times, to miss, by some immediate ignorance of the truth :

“ He who binds to himself a joy
Does the winged life destroy ;
But he who catches a joy as it flies
Lives in Eternity's sunrise.”

Katherine felt that Ida had looked to receive from her a wisdom she had not imparted : that she had failed Ida :

“ Ah, why can't I describe all that happens ! ” (she wrote in a notebook in 1914). “ I think quite seriously that L. M. and I are so extraordinarily interesting. It is not while *the thing* is happening that I think that but the significance is near enough to rear its heels and make me start, too. Have I ruined her happy life—am I to blame ? When I see her pale, and so tired that she shuffles her feet when she walks . . . when I see the buttons hanging off her coats, and her skirt torn—why do I call myself to account for all this—and feel that I am responsible for her. She gave me the gift of herself. ‘ Take me, Katie, I am yours. I will serve you and watch in your ways, Katie.’ I ought to have made a happy being of her and ought to have ‘ answered her prayers ’—they cost me so little and they were so humble. I ought to have proved my own worthiness of a disciple—but I did not. Yes, I am altogether to blame. Sometimes I excuse myself. ‘ We were too much of an age. I was experimenting and being hurt when she leaned upon me—I couldn't have stopped the sacrifice if I'd

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

wanted to.' But it's all altered to-night. . . . I came upon her . . . crouched by my fire like a little animal. So I helped her to bed on the sofa and have made hot drink and brought her some rugs and my dark eiderdown. And as I tucked her up, she was so touching—her long fair hair—so familiar—remembered for so long, drawn back from her face—that it was easy to stoop and kiss her—not as I usually do—one little half kiss—but quick long kisses such as one delights to give a tired child. 'Oh,' she sighed, 'I have dreamed of this . . . ' Ah, how I long to talk about it sometimes—not for a moment but until I am tired out and have got rid of the burden of memory. Yet it would be madness to expect J. to understand or to sympathise . . . ”

But six years later, in 1920, she “shed her sickness” in that story which—with her stern self-criticism—she was willing to acknowledge as “the one story which satisfies me to any extent”; when as Con “her flowerless one turned toward the sun” in *The Daughters of the Late Colonel*.

CHAPTER X

WHITE GARDENIA

"Dorian Gray had been poisoned by a book."—*The Picture of Dorian Gray*.—Oscar Wilde.

I

To the girls who lived their circumspect existence in the chill grey of "Woodie's" boarding house, what must the invitations to No. 72 Ladbroke Grove have meant? What of romantic enchantment, what of "life" is revealed in their exotic memories of it! A world to itself, governed by its own laws; only those knowing the "Open Sesame" were admitted to its mysteries. Qualifications for initiation appear to have been "exceptional ability" and personal charm.

Kathleen Beauchamp was initiated very early in her career at Queen's. An Album entry for June 29th, 1903, gives some of the essential "ethics of living," the understanding of which was necessary for entrance. She seems to have quickly mastered these. When she became familiar with the rites, she took for her symbol the white gardenia; and for her guide book, Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. No. 72 Ladbroke Grove was the home of Walter Rippmann, German professor at Queen's—"the professor" of Kathleen Beauchamp's memory of Queen's College. Young and ardent—while most

of the professors, like the domestic personnel, were aged—he took a personal interest in individual girls and their activities.

Before Kathleen entered Queen's College his house had been shared by Mrs. Grier, and Connie Grier—one of his students, a Canadian girl of the delicate "Gibson girl" type—whom he later married. During Kathleen's first years he had a young journalist and an artist living in his house. It was doubtless the artist who devised those effects which so thrilled the girls coming from their grey lodgings—effects that would have been "modern" even some thirty years later. Then, they were so new that they took the breath. The rooms were decorated in what afterward became known as "modernistic" colour and design. In the evenings they were lit by candles placed to throw cross lights—to make strange geometric patterns of shadow; and the girls came upon unexpected objects which, in that atmosphere, made their imagination leap and stumble in a new manner, while they listened to "new music," or to an Oscar Wilde play; at the colour teas, they seem to remember—in the pink-shaded light of more candles—rose-petals scattered over the hearth. In any case, their imaginations were kindled by a series of poses and attitudes, and by the charming manner of their host who later, as they looked back, became identified in their minds with Mr. Reginald Peacock (though he was not intended as the model for that versatile gentleman).

Of course the girls not included among the elect showed a certain jealousy. They couldn't gracefully accept the implication that they were neither more

WHITE GARDENIA

intelligent nor more interesting, nor prettier than some of the others. They, too, would have liked to be taken to cafés, and invited to teas, and plays, and musicals ; and when Gladys Williams was driven from the very door of Queen's College in a hansom cab they felt with satisfaction that Miss Harper, standing rigid and tight-lipped, disapproved.

Yet there was much that merited her approval. Walter Rippmann, at that time, was working on a book which later gave him no little prestige : *English for Foreigners*. He was using simple verses and poems to illustrate the exercises, and having seen Kathleen Beauchamp's early poetry, he asked her to write more for his book. This was her first experience in *almost* reaching commercial success—for ultimately Walter Rippmann discarded her verses in favour of classic quotations). But writing was not Kathleen Beauchamp's primary interest then ; so she was not discouraged. She merely was given a new incentive for writing poems, and while those particular ones never were published (though they are said to survive), her collaboration with E.K.B. on a book of child verses, after she returned to New Zealand, may have been a direct result of this reawakened interest.

Obviously it was not through his German lessons that Walter Rippmann's great influence was chiefly exerted. The verses of Richard Dehmel, which Kathleen remembered, is evidence of his taste :

“ Two lovers came and hid behind a tree and put up an umbrella—then they walked away, pressed against each other. It made me think of a poem that our German professor used to read in class.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

“ ‘ Ja, das war zum letztenmal
Das wir beide, arm in arme,
Unter einem Schirm gebogen . . .
. . . Alles war zum letztenmal . . . ’ ”

“ And I heard again his ‘ sad ’ voice (so beautiful it seemed, you know !) and I saw his white hand with the ring on it, press open the page.”

And Katherine’s friends noticed that whenever she wanted to enact a very, very romantic part, she quoted German.

His great service to her was the essential one of imaginative liberation. He introduced her to that discriminating attitude towards experience of which Walter Pater was the hierophant—the attitude which was a revelation to youth at the turn of the nineteenth century, when the prose of the Leonardo essay seemed the *ne plus ultra* of timeless wisdom speaking the language of time. He introduced his circle to the critical scepticism of Wilde, the appreciations of Arthur Symonds, the languid and despairing music of Ernest Dowson, the subtle simplicities of Paul Verlaine. He was the York Powell of a ladies’ college. That it was Wilde who chiefly impressed them was not entirely his fault ; it was inevitable that his young admirers should respond most readily to the showiest and the most specious. That is the way of youth. And if it be urged that the decadents were heady wine for adolescent girls, the reply is that if they had not been introduced to them by a brilliant Professor they would have found them—more furtively—for themselves. For the generation to which Kathleen belonged the decadents were the gateway to the imaginative life.

WHITE GARDENIA

Soon after Kathleen Beauchamp returned to England again from New Zealand she wrote an allegorical tale which she simply called *A Fairy Story*. It was of a boy who set out "to find the world," and a girl who set out "to find herself," and the Wanderer who woke her from her sweet child's dream, to give her the key to the book of knowledge. There is little doubt that the Wanderer was based on Walter Rippmann.

"They were twelve years old when the Wanderer came . . . and brought with him two great cases of books . . . the Girl, peering out of the window, heard him singing softly as he worked, 'Here with a loaf of bread beneath the bough.' He must be very hungry, she thought sympathetically.

"At this time she had read all Shakespeare and 'Lycidas,' and 'Paradise Lost,' and Dickens, and 'The Lady of the Lake.' Her mother had read to her 'You Never Can Tell,' 'The Doll's House' and 'Aglavaine and Selysette.'

"The Boy was reading 'What the Moon Saw,' and worshipping the ground she trod upon.

"One afternoon the Girl walked into the Wanderer's room. . . .

"'Well?' he said sharply, as the Girl stood by the door.

"'I want to look at your books,' said she.

"He glanced at her curiously . . .

"'I'm—I'm quite exceptional,' she said, hastily. 'I'm very advanced.'

"'Oh, are you?' said the Wanderer.

"'Don't think of what I *look* like; as Mr. Shaw says, "You Never Can Tell".'

"'Hang thee, sweet wench,' said the Wanderer, 'come along here—you know the "Open Sesame" and I'll show you the books.'

"And two hours later, they were both sitting on the

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

floor—and he was reading her Omar Khayyam, and she was looking into Arthur Symons.

“Then a new life began for the Girl. She, too, weeded carrots, and ate leeks and brown bread, and talked to the Wanderer. And he told her of London, of Spain, of Paris, of Brussels, and again London.

“And he taught her his ethics of life, and that unselfishness signifies lack of Progress—and that she must avoid the Seven Deadly Virtues. And she printed a little text, and hung it above her washstand—*‘The strongest man is he who stands most alone.’*

“When the bracken was turning golden . . . the Wanderer packed his knapsack and left them.

“But he gave the Girl his books, and with them a little card bearing his name and address.

“‘When the time comes,’ he said, ‘this will always find me.’

“She did not understand, but she sewed the card inside her pocket, and kissed the Wanderer on both cheeks.

“ . . . She had begun reading seriously. . . .

“And the Wanderer did not forget her. He sent her a postcard of Maxim Gorki, and a little book, ‘The Virgins of the Rocks’; she did not understand it, but it gave her beautiful dreams. One night, the following summer, the Girl sat on the doorstep watching the stars, and the Boy, beside her.

“‘Boy,’ she said, ‘What are you going to do?’

“‘I am going to find the world,’ he cried. . . .
‘And you, Girl?’

“‘I am going to find myself,’ the Girl answered. She put her hand into her pocket, and pressed the Wanderer’s little card. . . .”

What all this reading had revealed to the eager Colonial girl is only to be discovered in her diaries of those days. Of course, her aloof air, her composure (which began now, to be studied), her withdrawn, almost haughty manner when in a group,

WHITE GARDENIA

was deceptive. Who would have guessed the fire beginning to flare fanned by the emotions which turned back deep into her? For the other girls of sixteen, the decadents may have been safe enough, deflected by ignorance, or, at most, flowering from shallowly turned soil. But in Kathleen Beauchamp nothing flowered from a shallow place: whatever mattered to her was taken in until roots touched bottom.

Partly, at least, her introduction to Wilde, and in particular to *Dorian Gray* with its doctrine that life was something to be consciously explored, came through her friend "Mimi." She first lent Kathleen the book—an old number of *Lippincott's Magazine*—which had been lent to her by one of the teachers in the College school, with many injunctions to secrecy. From "Mimi" also came the notion of the emblem of the white gardenia. But probably it was the complete version of *Dorian Gray* which Kathleen's room-mate, Eileen Palliser, remembers as beneath her pillow at night and with her during the day. Eileen came upon her once, in her cubicle, reading a German book. Kathleen, a second senior, had studied German all through Queen's, and Eileen, several years younger and a junior, had only taken it for two or three terms; but she leaned over to see the book. To her surprise Kathleen snatched it away and closed it without stopping to mark the place. She merely said, "That's not for you!" But afterwards she kept all the books she was reading hidden from Eileen.

Kathleen's reading notes for that year (and for the two years following, when she was back in New

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Zealand) are filled with passages and epigrams copied from her reading. Wilde predominates, and his maxims were taken and absorbed into her, accepted as ethics, as the gospel of living. She said in those days, "I would rather have the highest heights and the lowest depths—*anything* rather than the placid middle line of life." In her first introduction to literature, she gave herself utterly to absorbing from it what she believed was "experience of life."

READING NOTES (1905-1907)

"To be premature is to be perfect."—O.W.

"Greek dress was in its essence inartistic. Nothing should reveal the body but itself."—O.W.

"Genius in a woman is the mystic laurel of Apollo springing from the soft breast of Daphne. It hastens the growing and sometimes breaks the heart from which it springs."—M.C.

"To acknowledge the presence of fear is to give birth to failure."—K.M.

"A man who speaks effectively through music is compelled to something more difficult than parliamentary eloquence."—G.E.

"Any great achievement in acting or in music grows with the growth. Whenever an artist has been able to say 'I came, I saw, I conquered,' it has been at the end of patient practice. Genius is at first little more than a great capacity for receiving (discipline). Your muscles, your whole frame must go like a watch true, true, true, true as a hair."—G.E.

"If any one should importune me to give a reason why I loved him, I feel it could not otherwise be explained than by making answer, 'Because it was he; because it was I'."—MONTAIGNE.

"The strongest man is he who stands most alone."
—HENRIK IBSEN.

WHITE GARDENIA

"Happy people are never brilliant. It implies friction."—K.M.

"It is not naturally or generally, the happy who are the most anxious for a prolongation of the present life or for a life hereafter ; it is those who have never been happy."—J.S.M.

" . . . it is no unnatural part of the idea of a happy life, that life itself is to be laid down, after the best that it can give has been fully enjoyed through a long lapse of time ; when all its pleasures, like those of benevolence, are familiar, *and nothing untasted or unknown* is left to stimulate curiosity and keep up the desire of prolonged existence."—J.S.M.

"Push everything as far as it will go."—O.W.

"The old desire everything—the middle-aged believe everything—the young know everything."—O.W.

"To love madly—perhaps is not wise—yet should you love madly—it is far wiser than not to love at all."—M.M.

"People who learn only from experience do not allow for intuition."—A.H.H.

"No life is spoiled but one whose growth is arrested."—O.W.

"We are not sent into the world to air our moral prejudices."—O.W.

"If you want to mar a nature, you have merely to reform it."—O.W.

"The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it."—O.W.

"Conscience and cowardice are the same things. Conscience is the trade mark of the firm. That is all."—O.W.

"To realise one's nature perfectly—that is what each of us is here for."—O.W.

(1907)

"I am that which is."

"No mortal man dare lift the veil."

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

"He is alone of himself; to him alone do all men owe their being."—RELIGION OF BEETHOVEN; AUGUST, 1805.

"Realise your youth while you have it. Don't squander the gold of your days listening to the tedious—trying to improve the hopeless failure—or giving away your life to the ignorant, the common or the vulgar—which are the aims, the false ideals of our Age. Live! Live the wonderful life which is in you. Let nothing be lost upon you. Be always reaching. . . . Be afraid of nothing."—O.W.

"Ambition is a curse if you are not . . . proof against everything else, unless you are willing to sacrifice yourself to your ambition."—A WOMAN (K.M.).

"It cannot be possible to go through all the abandonment of music and care humanly for anything human afterward."—A WOMAN.

"All musicians, no matter how insignificant, come to life emancipated of their power to take life seriously. It is not one man or woman but the complete octave of sex that they desire."—A.W.

"You feel helpless under the yoke of creation."—A.W.

"Nature makes such fools of us! What is the use of liking anyone if the washerwoman can do exactly the same thing? Well, this is Nature's trick to ensure population."—A.W.

"Most women turn to salt, looking back."—A.W.

"Big people have always entirely followed their own inclinations. Why should we remember the names of people who do what everyone does? To (be in) love with success is to be illustrious."—A.W.

"I do not want to earn a living; I want to live."—O.W.

"You inspect yourself from the heights of an inspiration and rebound in sickening jolts from pinnacles to the mud on the street."—A.W.

"A woman really cannot understand music till she has the actual experience of those laboriously con-

WHITE GARDENIA

cealed things which are evidently the foundation of them all."—A.W. (K.M.)

"The translation of an emotion into act is its death—its logical end. . . . But . . . this way isn't the act of unlawful things. It is the curiosity of our own temperament, the delicate expression of our own tendencies, the welding into an Art of act or incident some raw emotion of the blood. For we castrate our minds to the extent by which we deny our bodies."—O.W.

March 20, 1907. Selections from *Dorian Gray*

"Being natural is simply a pose—and the most irritating pose I know. . . . I like persons with no principles better than anything else in the world."

"The worst of having a romance of any kind is that it leaves one so unromantic."

"Those who are faithful know only the trivial side of love ; it is the faithless who know love's tragedies."

"No influence is immoral—immoral from the scientific point of view. Nothing can cure the soul but the senses—just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul."—O.W.

2

The novel, *Juliet*, which Kathleen Beauchamp began on May 18th, 1907, her last term at Queen's, shows this influence. She absorbed so completely what she was reading at the time ; it became such a part of her, that it was inevitable she should reflect something of it, just as she reflected in all of her writing her state, her immediate attitude to life, as well as her mood of the moment.

What she was writing for herself, then, was vastly different from the sketches she wrote for publication in the *College Magazine*. Those, with one exception, had been stories of her New Zealand childhood.

That exception was the second to be published (March, 1904), *Die Einsame*, unlike the others in style, with something of herself in its conception of the solitary life of the spirit, but in its form obviously influenced by her reading. Ida Baker, at the same time, had written a story "practically the same thing, but, of course, without the literary mark," as she explained: "it was because we were so much in harmony."

Kathleen's story was highly spoken of by Miss Bedford, the drawing instructor. In her next three, nevertheless, she returned to her childhood theme, in great contrast to the contributions which made up the rest of the magazine: what *The Candid Critic*, a caustic scarlet-covered junior pamphlet appearing in June, 1905, called "Odes to Spring and Fairy Tales by College Hans Andersens." Her next published sketch (December, 1904) was *Your Birthday*, a sprightly but very tender study of a child. For the following half-yearly issue (July, 1905) the twenty-second year of the magazine, Kathleen Beauchamp was sub-Editor and Ida Baker, Treasurer. Kathleen's story was *One Day*, a day in the life of the children of her family; and, her sister says, a true picture. She had not yet mastered her material, however, and the style was artificial, though there were some amusing and several charming touches and consistent character drawing of the four children. For the next issue (December, 1905) she was Head Editor, with Francis Maurice sub-Editor. In that number, her sketch, *About Pat*, showed something of the perception that triumphed in her later work.

WHITE GARDENIA

She evidently had no connection with the issue of her final term (July, 1906). By that time she was writing for herself alone. She was beginning to live vividly and with new awareness, and she was putting so much of it into *Juliet* that the "novel" was too "advanced" to be offered to a college audience.

3

During the time she was writing *Juliet* (her last three months at Queen's) Arnold Trowell was in London giving recitals at the Bechstein Hall, before audiences that were, for the most part, very enthusiastic. He had finished his two years' study in Brussels, and had been playing on the Continent.

Kathleen herself heard him in Brussels on March 26th (1906), while she was on Easter holidays under the chaperonage of Bell Dyer. What must have been her exhilaration to sit in that audience applauding with enthusiasm the boy whom she had made her artistic counterpart during the three years since she left New Zealand? All was altered. All was different from that far-away time of her childhood when she had sat in the Sydney Street Hall in Wellington and listened to the fourteen-year-old "local prodigy." She felt that she was a woman now. Through her reading, through glimpses of London cafés, she felt she "knew life." How much older she thought herself than most of the girls about her! And the belief that this genius of seventeen, this young composer who could transport his audiences actually belonged to her, sent her

imagination winging in the wake of his music to ecstasy.

It was about this time—when they met again—that there was a tacit agreement between them practically amounting to an engagement.

While she was in Brussels, too, she met Rudolph, upon whom she modelled the “villain” in *Juliet*. Rudolph was one of Arnold’s musician friends—a handsome, excitable and temperamental youth. He had brusque ways, covering his supersensitiveness. It was he who gave Kathleen the cue to calling Arnold “Old Hoss,” with a clap on the shoulder (perhaps it was, too, a reminiscence of *Trilby*, which was a favourite book of Kathleen’s at this time).

Rudolph shot himself soon afterward. Kathleen took it very much to heart. This experience of sudden death in her own world—the death of a friend of Arnold, a boy whom she had known, and who had fired her imagination—was quite another thing from “knowing life” through books. This was her first personal experience of the feeling which she later tried to convey through Laura (in *The Garden Party*) whose bewilderment she described in a letter :

“The diversity of life, and how we try to fit in everything, Death included. That is bewildering for a person of Laura’s age. She feels things ought to happen differently. First one and then another. But life isn’t like that. We haven’t the ordering of it. Laura says, ‘But all these things must not happen at once.’ And Life answers, ‘Why not? How are they divided from each other?’ And they do all happen; it is inevitable.”

WHITE GARDENIA

She was too near the beginning of things, then, to be able to add :

“And it seems to me there is beauty in that inevitability.”

She met Maata again. Maata stayed in London for a short time on her way back from Paris. She came—a finished little Parisian in dress and manner. “She kept her feet as exquisitely as she did her hands,” Maata’s mother said. Their meeting was rapturous and romantic. Two years later, when they both were keeping diaries (and Kathleen preserved Maata’s all her life, expecting to make some use of it) she looked back longingly to that time together in London :

“In the pocket of an old coat I found one of Ariadne’s gloves—a cream coloured suede glove fastening with two silver buttons. It has been there two years—but still it holds some exquisite suggestion of Carlotta (Maata)—still when I lay it against my cheek I can detect the sweet of the perfume she affected. O, Carlotta—have you remembered? We were floating down Regent Street in a hansom—on either side of us the blossoms of golden light—and ahead a little half hoop of a moon.”

When Maata had gone, Kathleen arranged to meet the Trowell brothers. This was possible by taking advantage of the permission given to girls over a certain age to go out in the company of another Queen’s girl.

“I met them both (writes one of her friends) at the London Academy of Music, where Kathleen went to play in the orchestra every Friday (I believe). I thought them (the two T.’s) the most extraordinary

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

beings I had ever met. Red-haired, pale, wearing huge black hats (a very familiar thing that, now) and smoking the longest cigarettes I had ever seen, or have."

From that purely external picture, one can guess the importance of the two brothers in Kathleen's life at this time. They were authentic denizens of the enchanted world of Art, wearing its livery. In their company, and their genuine friendship, Kathleen was for moments made free of another kind of existence ; and she was stirred far beyond anything she had known in what one of the girls called "the hot-bed of emotion" at Queen's.

Then the realisation—so evident in her journal and her "novel" of that time—began to creep over her : she did not mean to Arnold what she believed he meant to her. Yet, vividly as she forced herself to meet her experiences, she could not at once accept this appalling thing. At first it was just a shadow, reflected in her writing, but not received as reality. Two years later she still was refusing to accept it as truth, even when she wrote to Arnold in her journal a letter not to be sent :

" . . . O—let it remain as it is—Do not suddenly crush out this, the beautiful flower—I am afraid even while I am rejoicing . . . "

It did not make it any easier that she was in love with an ideal which she herself had created during those changing and emotional three years when she had not seen him, but had built up her dream through letters—so many more on her part than on his. It was not until her return to London three

WHITE GARDENIA

years later, that she was to face the real truth of the situation. Now, in *Juliet*, she admitted it for a moment, in fancy only to deny it later :

“ ‘ She hates me,’ Rudolph said.

“ ‘ I only wish she hated me,’ said David. ‘ It is an impossible position—I feel as though I ought to love her . . . but I do not. She is too much like me. I understand her too well. We are both too moody. We both feel too much the same about everything . . . and so she does not attract me. Do you understand ? ’ ”

Two chapters from *Juliet* reflect something of what was happening then : the uneasiness, the sleeplessness of the time when she was meeting Arnold. Her room-mate remembers that she came back from those meetings in a state so highly strung that she would throw herself on the bed, weeping violently ; that she talked and moaned and walked in her sleep ; that she went to fortune-tellers to “ try to discover the future ” ; that she started going to séances, which only upset her the more. One day she announced to the girls that she was “ going to have a séance ” ; and when they prepared for the table rapping, she “ went into a trance ”—as one of them remembers—“ and talked so wildly that we were frightened out of our wits, and had to shake her violently to bring her back to herself.”

Since Arnold had come to London, everything had subtly changed for Kathleen. It was not Arnold’s coming, merely, nor Garnet’s coming—then. It was that intangible shifting of relationships of which Katherine Mansfield was always so acutely aware. Everything was weaving a new

pattern—and a strange light played over it—shadowed, diffused. In it they all looked different ; and she, too, as she looked down upon herself, seemed strange.

Her manner toward Ida appeared abrupt to spectators. They heard her say : “ Oh, I couldn’t come then ! ” after Ida had waited for her at an appointed place. They heard her say : “ Ida ! Get my handkerchief from the left-hand bureau drawer ! ” And they heard Ida’s quiet reply : “ Yes, Katie darling.” Yet it was the sign that now all was accepted, the adjustment made ; and that it was sometimes difficult for Kathleen to reveal herself to one who—because she loved her—could interpret the secret most poignant meaning : “ I feel I have to tear a delicate veil from my heart when I speak to her ; and I feel that I oughtn’t to tear it. Is that nonsense ? ” Though she hid, at moments, behind a mask, there was the tacit acceptance, only rarely remarked as when, a dozen years later, they had discussed the inexplicable, and Katherine Mansfield, “ talking it over ” afterwards with herself :

“ I must not forget the long talk L. M. and I had. . . . The marvel is that she understands. No one else on earth could understand.” (And on that same occasion) “ All that week she had her little corner. ‘ I may come into my little corner tonight ? ’ she asks timidly, and I reply—so cold, so cynical—‘ If you want to.’ But what would I do if she didn’t come ? ”

There was the wordless thing between them which they knew, and no other : that Ida, uninstructed, understood certain of Katherine’s needs, as

WHITE GARDENIA

Katherine, by her very being, supplemented Ida's. The din around them, the mischances, the nervous tensions of daily living could not intrude upon the centre of peace, the "silent singing" of that which lay between.

In Queen's College days Ida was one "with whom she could be herself." Kathleen knew (and there were times when she desperately needed to know) that no matter what could happen in her world, Ida was steadfast. They evolved between them, once, a symbol: Ida was the tall green column, and herself the live bird who rested upon it—and from it flew away—only to return before taking the new flight. Except for occasional restless periods, it was always to be so. Superficial circumstances might seem to intervene, but the intangible relationship remained—out of sight, at times—beyond reach, even—yet recognised, acknowledged, as when Katherine Mansfield wrote from Paris in 1915 :

"You sent me a letter from L. M. which was simply marvellous. She wrote, as she can, you know, of all sorts of things, grass and birds and little animals and herself and our friendship with that kind of careless, very infinite joy—There is something quite absolute in Lesley—She said at the end of a page—'Katie, dearie—what is *Eternity*?' She's about the nearest thing to eternal that I could ever imagine. I wish she were not so far away . . ."

The chapters of *Juliet* written during the last months at Queen's show not only the restlessness which Kathleen seemed impotent to control, but also the fierce rebellion which rose in her at her

father's intention of taking the girls back to New Zealand, when they had finished college at the end of July, 1906 ; and her desperate and unavailing attempts to persuade the family to let her remain in London. That they were unable to understand the depth of her desire is not remarkable ; neither is it strange that it should have seemed to her impossible to be torn from a place where she felt her whole life was centred—all her friends and her interests, and all her opportunities. She believed in herself—yet when one is young, if that belief is not supported by the belief of another, the doubt creeps in : “ *Can* I do this thing ? ” So she flew to Ida, crying : “ But *you* believe in me—don't you ? ”

Her father said, in bewilderment : “ I hardly know the girls ; I've lost them now. I'll never send the two younger children ‘ home ’ to be educated.”

But Kathleen, reassured, said to her room-mate : “ When I get to New Zealand, I'll make myself so objectionable that they'll *have* to send me away.” Even then she had perception enough—penetration enough—to know the one way of escape.





47 FITZHERBERT TERRACE, WELLINGTON

CHAPTER XI

WELLINGTON : 47 FITZHERBERT TERRACE

"I do not want to earn a living ; I want to live."—*Oscar Wilde*. (K. M.'s Note Book, 1907.)

I

THE Beauchamp family moved to 47 Fitzherbert Terrace soon after the girls returned to Wellington. The Terrace was the short street behind Tinakori Road, on the other side of the Gully. A swinging bridge joined the two from the Walter Nathan's corner (which was No. 13 on Tinakori Road, beside Kathleen's birthplace) to Miss Swainson's School, second from the bottom of Fitzherbert Terrace. No. 47 was a huge house—larger than "Chesney Wold," larger than 75 Tinakori Road. It stood second from the top of Fitzherbert Terrace, where the trams turned on Molesworth Street.

On one of her first days back in Wellington, Kass went over the old haunts—down Hill Street, past the Green Gate, through the short cut to the Convent gardens. Had it dwindled, had it changed, while she was away in London ?

"i. x. 06.

"I walk along the broad, almost deserted street. It has a meaningless, forsaken, careless look—like a woman who has ceased to believe in her beauty. The splendid rhythm of life is absent. With their

white faces the people pass to and fro—silently—drearly—All colour seems to have lost its keenness. The street is as toneless as a great stretch of sand. And now I pass through the narrow iron gates up the little path and through the heavy doors into the church. Silence hung motionless over the church ; the shadow of her great wings darkened everything. Through the door the figures of the saints showed—and the altar shone mystical—vision-like. Then I noticed there were many people kneeling in the pews—their attitude strangely beatific—almost old world. A nun came and sat beside me. She raised a passionless, expressionless face—and the rosary shone like a thread of silver through her fingers.”

Now, as Kass leaned from her window in the new home in Fitzherbert Terrace, it seemed strange to see so little of the Tinakori Hills, so little of the Harbour ; and to hear the lumbering of trams mingled with the song of *tuis*. But it was of little moment. She leaned out, looking over the same dark pines that used to hide Ole Underwood so long—four years—ago, pines with a blue ribbon of asphalt running between ; but actually, she was leaning out over Mansfield Mews, listening to distant London surging beyond Harley Street :

“ Away beyond the line of dark houses there is a sound like the call of the sea after a storm—passionate, solemn, strong . . . ”

She drew back into the room and looked at herself in the glass :

“ The same Kathie of long ago, and yet not the same.” Then she pulled the curtains, to shut out Wellington, to shut in her own world :

“ Here in my room I feel as though I was in London—in London. To write the word makes me feel that

I could burst into tears. Isn't it terrible to love anything so much ? I do not care at all for men, but London—it is Life . . . ”

Here in Wellington it was early morning, early spring ; there in London it was Indian summer, and night, with the lights brilliant in Piccadilly Circus. People were streaming from cafés, from the theatres, from Queen's and Bechstein Hall. Perhaps Arnold Trowell had been playing. She heard the quick notes of his “ clever performance,” the comfortable murmur and shuffle of the crowds ; she saw the revolving lights.

Here—Wellington—nobody smoked. No advantages. No writers. No artists. No pictures. No books. Who that she knew had heard of Rossetti ? (She had just said to Mary, the “ model pupil ” of Miss Swanson : “ You ought to read Rossetti ! ”) As for having read Wilde ! Their idea of interesting conversation was babies and jam-making. Their idea of a big party was Godber's meringues for tea ! She *loathed* those things ; she couldn't be bothered talking or thinking trivialities. After the friends she'd made, after “ literary London,” Wellington was a prison : “ If Denmark's a prison, then is life one.” She had given up everything in coming back, and she was now eighteen. She had vowed—she had written the promise to herself, and signed it and burned it : “ In two years I will be famous.” In two years she would be twenty, and buried—as good as dead—at the bottom of the world.

At such times—in such moods—she turned to her 'cello, or to writing and reading.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

From *Vignettes*

"A year ago we sat by the fire, she and I, hand in hand, cheek to cheek, speaking but little, and then whispering, because the room was so dark, the fire so low, and the rain outside so loud and bitter.

"She, a thin little figure in a long, soft black frock, and a string of amethysts around her white throat.

"Eventually it grew so cold that I dragged the blanket from the bed, and we wrapped ourselves up in it, smiling a little and saying, 'We feel like children on a desert island.' With one hand she held the rough, gaily-striped thing up to her chin; the other hand lay in mine. We talked of fame, how we both longed for it, how hard the struggle was, what we both meant to do. I found a piece of paper, and together we wrote a declaration vowing that in the space of one year we should both have become famous. And we signed the paper and sealed it; then, dedicating it to the gods, dropped it into the fire. For a moment a bright light, and then a handful of ashes. By and bye she fell asleep, and I gave her my share of the blanket, and arranged a sofa pillow in her low chair. The long night dragged coldly through, while I watched her, and thought, and longed, but could not sleep.

"To-day, at the other end of the world, I have suffered, and she, doubtless, has bought herself a new hat at the February sales. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

"K. MANSFIELD."

2

The books in her room at the Terrace lined the wall from the floor upwards for some four or five feet: sitting on the floor, she could reach any volume. The little room was arranged like a studio: her writing table by the window, her few treasures

carefully placed—the Velasquez Venus, six small nude studies, bowls of flowers, her 'cello “dreaming in the corner.” Like Grandmother Mansfield, she loved tidiness ; her room was a projection of herself. Trespassers were intolerable.

One afternoon, being torn away from her sanctuary to meet people at tea, she startled them all by bursting out furiously : “ I loathe this provincial place ! Nobody in it understands me, and they haven't any of my interests, and I detest it here ! ”

And on another occasion : “ At five o'clock I go down to Wellington to watch *Life*.”

Much of her time was spent upstairs, writing. When she closed the door, she could shut out the whole world :

“ Oh ! this monotonous, terrible rain. The dull, steady, hopeless sound of it. I have drawn the curtains across the windows to shut out the weeping face of the world—the trees swaying softly in their grief and dropping silver tears upon the brown earth, the narrow, sodden, mean, draggled wooden houses, colourless save for the dull coarse red of the roof, and the long line of grey hills, impassable, spectral-like.

“ So I have drawn the curtains across my windows, and the light is intensely fascinating. A perpetual twilight broods here. The atmosphere is heavy with morbid charm. Strange, as I sit here, quiet, alone, how each possession of mine—the calendar gleaming whitely on the wall, each picture, each book, my 'cello case, the very furniture—seems to stir into life. The Velasquez Venus moves on her couch ever so slightly ; across the face of Manon a strange smile flickers for an instant and is gone, my rocking chair is full of patient resignation, my 'cello case is wrapt in profound thought. Beside me a little bowl of mig-

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

nonette is piercingly sweet, and a cluster of scarlet geraniums is hot with colour.

"Sometimes through the measured sound of the rain comes the long, hopeless note of a fog horn far out at sea. And then all life seems but a crying out drearily, and a groping to and fro in a foolish, aimless darkness. Sometimes—it seems like miles away—I hear the sound of a door downstairs opening and shutting.

"And I listen and think and dream until my life seems not *one* life, but a thousand million lives, and my soul is weighed down with the burden of past existence, with the vague, uneasy consciousness of future strivings.

"And the grey thoughts fall upon my soul like the grey rain upon the world, but I cannot draw the curtain and shut them out." *

3

"*The Sketch* always reminds me of the morning-room at 47," Kathleen wrote, long afterward, to Marie. This big house, the scene of the tumultuous years of her New Zealand life, did not so readily become her "possession" as either the two homes in Tinakori Road, or "Chesney Wold" in Karori. Yet, had she continued to write, she undoubtedly would have set stories here. In 1920 she was turning back toward it, at last, though it had taken ten years to transcend the conflict of those days :

"Even if one does not acquire any 'fresh meat'—one's vision of what one possesses is continually

* Il pleure dans mon cœur
Comme il pleut sur la ville.

Verlaine : *La Bonne Chanson*.

changing into something rich and strange, isn't it? I feel mine is. 47, Fitzherbert Terrace *p. e.* is colouring beautifully with the years and I polish it and examine it, and only now is it ready to come out of the store room into the uncommon light of day."

The family in 47 was rather quieter than it had been in the earlier homes. Bell Dyer had married, in England, and was living (as Wellington put it) "in a house full of servants." The Grandmother had moved to Bolton Street to stay with friends. Vera was being courted by a young Canadian geologist who was engaged on a survey in New Zealand; and her departure was imminent.

Leslie Heron ("Chummie") was going away to the Wailaki Boys' High School. He was twelve, now—a fine, upstanding lad with charm and self-assurance. Kathleen had been too busied by the urgency of her own evolving life to show more affection toward him than toward the other members of her family. Probably she was barely conscious of her affection at the time. It was something realised much later, as she looked back; yet, even two years afterward, she summarised one aspect of her relation to "Chummie." After all, he was her only brother, and a very nice one.

"I felt maternal toward him. As a baby he clung to me, and all the years after, I could, when I looked at him, feel those little hands around my neck. He had a little habit of bringing me flowers—a rose, some violets, a spray of apple blossom—Yes, he was always coming to me with his hands full of flowers.

"I see him as a little child, sitting on the table, while I scrubbed his grubby knees, and after his bath in my room in the morning, in his pink pyjamas, his

hair curling all over his head, standing on one leg and flicking his towel, and crying : ' It's a lovely day, dearest.' (And at night the game, ' Payjama-arm.')

" After playing cricket, stumbling up the stairs, hot, out of breath, and his shirt collar unbuttoned, his hair on end, damp, and mopping his face with an indescribable handkerchief. He was so absentminded, too . . . He read everything I gave him.

" I remember very well saying Good-bye to him. He was going away to school, and we kissed for a moment, and then I leaned out of the window. It had been raining. The air was very cool and clean. He waved to me from the gate, and I listened, hearing his glad little footsteps die down the street, fainter and fainter, so fast out of my life."

Between Kathleen and her mother there was a certain similarity—a particular fastidiousness for one thing, which came to both from the Grandmother. Mrs. Beauchamp would refuse a cup of tea having a drop of milk spilled in the saucer : " That's for *servants* ! " she would say ; and how high poised was her fine little head, with the high arched brows and the little frown between, as she said it, so airily.

Kathleen had something of her mother's manner ; she looked rather like her, too—had her colouring. And though she was more Beauchamp than Dyer, she had something of her mother's nature. Mrs. Beauchamp, at one time, had wanted to write (her letters always were delightful) ; she was in sympathy with Kathleen's longing to be a writer, even though she couldn't comprehend the demands, the restrictions, which this desire imposed upon her daughter.

Kathleen once tried to express something of their relationship :

“ . . . I often long to lean against Mother and know she understands things . . . that can't be told . . . that would fade at a breath . . . *delicate needs* . . . a feeling of fineness and gentleness. But what Mother hadn't is an understanding of work.”

Her mother's detached air—the way of seeming to live utterly apart from the little world to which she willingly gave herself—had by no means lessened since the children were grown. If anything, it seemed more pronounced now that there was need for keeping up social position.

Her husband had realised his life-long ambition for acquisition and influence ; he had now become one of the commercial magnates of New Zealand. In 1894 he had been a general merchant and a Justice of the Peace ; now, in 1907, he was many things beside : a commanding figure in the profitable frozen meat trade, a member of the Harbour Board, managing director of the Building and Investment Company—he himself had purchased land of which the future increase in value was assured—Director of the Bank of New Zealand, on the brink of becoming its Chairman. He had identified himself completely with the commercial and financial development of Wellington during a period of great prosperity, and he had prospered accordingly.

His was the determination to take him straight to his chosen goal, and he was near enough to the pioneer to find the materials still flexible in his

hands. He had the sensitive pride of the man rising rapidly, by his own capacities, and he found protection in armour of his own forging. Anything which stood in the way of his purpose was, of course, intolerable (and Katherine—looking toward such a different goal—was to be her father's daughter). Wealth was the great means to his end, and he expected, as a matter of course, to manage his family as he managed his business : "on a sound financial basis."

Mrs. Beauchamp was not, in any sense, "a climber." But she loyally kept up her end—went to teas, made calls, gave musical evenings and dances for the children in the big Fitzherbert Terrace house. Kathleen, at least, understood how alien it was from her mother's own real world :

"It was the late afternoon when Mrs. Sheridan, after having paid Heaven knows how many calls, turned towards home.

" 'Thank Heaven that's all over ! ' she sighed, as she clicked the last gate to, and stuffed her little Chinese card-case into her handbag.

"But it was not all over. Although she hadn't the faintest desire to remember her afternoon, her mind, evidently, was determined she should not forget it. And so she walked along seeing herself knocking at doors, crossing dim halls into large pale drawing-rooms, hearing herself saying, 'No, she would not have any tea, thank you. Yes, they were all splendidly well. No, they had not seen it yet. The children were going to-night. Yes, fancy ! he had arrived. Young and good-looking too ! Quite an asset ! Oh dear no ! She was determined not to allow any of her girls to marry. It was quite unnecessary now-a-days, and such a risk ! ' And so on and so on.

" 'What nonsense calling is ! What a waste of time !

I have never met a single woman yet who even pretended to like it. Why keep it up then? Why not decide once and for all? Mock orange,' and Mrs. Sheridan woke out of her dream to find herself standing under a beautiful mock orange bush that grew against the white palings of old Mr. Phillips' garden. The little sponge-like fruits? Flowers? Which were they—shone burning bright in the late afternoon sun.

" 'They are like little worlds,' she thought, peering up through the large crumpled leaves and she put her hand and touched one gently. Now her glove was all brushed with yellow. But it didn't matter. She was glad, even. 'I wish you grew in my garden,' she said regretfully to the mock orange bush, and she went on, thinking, 'I wonder why I love flowers so much. None of the children inherit from me. Laura perhaps. But even then it's not the same. She's too young to feel as I do. I love flowers more than people, except my own family, of course. But take this afternoon, for instance. The only thing that really remains is that mock orange.' "

Kathleen was to comprehend, very fully, in time, her mother's detachment. It arose not as her own did, now, from inward division, from the longing of the soul to be in places where the body was not; but rather it was the outcome of an existence passed in spaces between the known worlds—the almost disembodied life of one for whom "the barriers are down . . . and you've only to slip through." Finally, in her own experience, Katherine was to understand:

"Once the defences are fallen between you and death they are not built up again. . . . Mother, of course, lived in this state for years. Ah, but she lived *surrounded*. She had her husband, her children, her

home, her friends, physical presences, darling treasures to be cherished."

Yet this suspended state had its inevitable effect upon her children.

4

One thing which the whole family shared was its pleasure in music. The father had always enjoyed it, the mother was something of a pianist, and the three older girls were talented. Kathleen had composed poems for Vera to set to music, and Marie to sing. Their uncle, Mr. Waters, had sung them when the girls were at Queen's, and they were a feature of the musical evenings, now, in the big bare music-room at 47, when the trio played : Kathleen the 'cello, old Mr. Trowell the violin, and various different friends the piano.

Kathleen had been studying the 'cello again under old Mr. Trowell. For a while, the three girls had a plan to attend a convent at Island Bay—Vera to take piano lessons, Kathleen to continue with her 'cello, and Marie to do needlework. On the way to make arrangements, they waited some time for a car ; when finally a workman's car came by, Vera said to the motor-man : " Do you think we can manage to take this ? " Afterward, Kathleen flared at her : " How could you talk that way to him ? We're all alike ! I wish I was covered with *mud* ! "

Since the Island Bay plan did not materialise, Kathleen continued with her trio practice in Wellington. Neighbours remember her passing swiftly down Tinakori Road—the cumbersome

'cello apparently no burden—and singing as she sped down the hill. They exchanged glances, some of them, and laughed : “ Aren't they putting on a lot of style with those big instruments ! ”

It had been made somewhat difficult for the girls on their return from London, not because their father was a self-made man—in this young country everyone was self-made—but he had made himself more rapidly than most, and when, after the girls' return, “ he took that big house in Fitzherbert Terrace,” some Wellington circles resented it. Nor was it customary, at that time, for girls to be sent “ home ” to England to be educated. The immediate consequence of this estrangement was that they were thrown back, more than ever, upon their own family life, and upon their immediate friends.

Their musical evenings—an outstanding institution in a community dependent entirely upon its own resources for diversion—often ended with a dance. Thrilling event ! Years later Kathleen could capture even the anticipation of “ a family dance ” :

“ The excitement began first thing that morning by their father suddenly deciding that, after all, they could have champagne. What ! Impossible ! Mother was joking !

“ A fierce discussion had raged ever on this subject since the invitations were sent out, Father pooh-poohing—and refusing to listen, and Mother, as usual siding with him when she was with him : (‘ Of course, darling : I quite agree ’) and siding with them when she was with them : (‘ Most unreasonable. I more than see the point. ’) So that by the time they had definitely given up hope of champagne, and had focussed all their attention on the hock cup instead.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

And now, for no reason whatever, with nobody saying a word to him—so like Father!—he had given in.

“‘It was just after Zaidee had brought in our morning tea. He was lying on his back, you know, staring at the ceiling, and suddenly he said: ‘I don’t want the children to think I am a wet blanket about this dance affair. If it’s going to make all that difference to them, if it’s a question of the thing going with a swing or not going with a swing I’m inclined to let them have champagne. I’ll call in and order it on my way to the Bank.’”

“‘My dear! What did you say?’

“‘What could I say? I was overcome. I said: ‘That’s very generous of you, Daddy dear,’ and I placed the entire plate of cut bread and butter on his chest. As a kind of sacrifice to the darling. I felt he deserved it and he does so love those thin shaves of bread and butter.’

“‘Can’t you see the plate,’ cried Laurie, ‘gently rising and falling on his pyjama jacket?’

“‘They began to laugh, but it really was most thrilling. Champagne did make all the difference—didn’t it? Just the feeling it was there gave such a different. . . . Oh, absolutely!’”

It was not of this, but of another sketch from the same period of memory—*Her First Ball*—that she said :

“‘I have been writing about a dance this afternoon, and remembering how one polished the floor was so thrilling that everything was forgotten.’”

Then there was the dance itself—the big bare, flower-filled room, cleared ; an impromptu orchestra playing by the lamplight which threw such shadows over the wide sleeves and top-knots of the girls ; and the boys whom they had known all their lives—now

half grown, stiff in "Sunday suits," coming to ask for the waltzes and lancers ; Siegfried Eichelbaum, Cheviot Bell, "Chummie," and the Nathans who used to live next door.

George Nathan asked Kass for a dance on one of these evenings.

She answered abruptly : " I know you hate me ! Why do you ask me to dance ? "

He was surprised, but not nonplussed, being one of those stout, hearty lads who laugh easily.

" But I don't hate you ! " he said.

And he didn't. He was thinking he couldn't say she was attractive. He liked the slinky type, and she was plump, and had a quick way of speaking at you so you never knew what she was going to say. " She frightens people away," he decided, as he crossed the room for another of Godber's meringues.

5

How differently each of her friends saw Kathleen Beauchamp. It was so all of her life. Few of her friends "knew" her : she had an outward chameleon quality by which she could match herself to the individual and the situation, until her acquaintances were baffled—unable to agree "who she was." A certain sure intuition made her protect herself from most of them. Few knew anything of her life beyond their own immediate part in it. She completed, rounded off, her experiences quickly ; she passed rapidly from one circle to another ; she seldom mentioned her earlier life to the new group,

and since she really was a different person in the various stages of her swift development she left her acquaintances with widely divergent impressions. To herself she was like one in a train who, even as he waves to those left behind on the platform, is seeing the new destination which they would never know. She often said to Ida : " I've finished with all that ; now let's forget it ! "

During most of her life she made her friends among those who had an artistic aim corresponding to her own. When she returned to Wellington most of her first acquaintances were musicians.

Matty, Mr. Beauchamp's secretary, was a member of their trio—one who could be called upon to accompany Kathleen's practices. Kathleen could telephone to her, when she felt in the mood, as she did on the evening when she said :

" There's a fine fire in Harold's study. He and the girls are away. Do come, dear. We can talk there. I hate society ! There's so much hypocrisy in it ! "

Matty smiled over this with her own peculiar satisfaction. She looked upon Kathleen Beauchamp as she might have looked upon the star of a troupe of players descended upon Wellington fresh from London.

She had seen Kathleen for the first time after her return, on a Saturday morning in October, at eleven o'clock, entering the D.I.C. tea-room, a social centre of Wellington. Hesitating a moment, glancing across the crowded little tables, Kathleen met her own eyes in a gilt-framed mirror. With a slight pause as she passed it, she pushed the eye-veil back

over the little round hat with the Mercury wings—her “Wooza” pinned to the back hair above the stiff linen collar. She was fully conscious of the glance passing between Matty and the girl with her. Matty’s pointed little nose fairly leaned toward her cheek in eager agitation. As she passed, Kathleen took out a cigarette, and said coolly : “How are you, dear?”

During the following months she allowed herself to be cultivated. In these matters she never was obtuse.

“What do you think of relatives who call one ‘posey and affected’?” she asked Matty once, speaking of a letter received by the family. Secretly immensely intrigued, Matty merely answered : “It isn’t very tactful.” Matty had concluded that Kathleen could be “posey without its really seeming to be affectation.” She who never thought of herself as a picture to be appropriately framed was enthralled by what, to her, was remarkable and individual in the dress and appearance of Kathleen Beauchamp. After a concert which they attended together, someone asked her : “Who was that fine-looking girl you were with?” Matty preened herself over this. She secretly thought that Kass had “a fine proud bearing, magnificent dark eyes, beautifully waved hair, and distinction,” and she took the compliment to herself.

At one concert Kathleen sat in the balcony, dressed in a simple black frock and toying with a red rose ; but at an afternoon tea she was wearing a plain dress of heavy, stiff stuff and a stiff dark hat, while everyone else was fluffy. She told Matty later

that Marie had made them, and added : “ It’s counterpane stuff ! ”

That was another thing which held Matty charmed and astonished : she never knew what Kass would say. Though she always appeared serious, though Matty never saw more than a slight change of expression—though she spoke in a monotone, she was always making dry comments on things and people, which seemed to Matty daring and dangerous and delightful, as when, in the middle of a concert, just after a tenor solo, she leaned over to her and whispered : “ Wasn’t he an elongated clothes horse ? ”

CHAPTER XII THE GROWING OF WINGS

"The head can offer no account."—*Keats*.

I

"I WISH that I was as far advanced in my work as you are in yours—but I am far from it," Kass had written to "E.K.B."—Edith ("Edie") Kathleen Bendall—early in 1907.

About this time the following entry appeared in her Note Book :

"There is—I think Mr. Trowell. Definitely I have decided not to be a musician——It's not my forte—I can plainly see——The fact remains at that—I must be an authoress. Cæsar (A.T.) is losing hold of me. Edie (E.K.B.) is waiting for me—I shall slip into her arms. They are safest. Do you love me?"

Everyone remembers the laughter greeting her announcement : "I'm going to be a writer !" Her Aunt and Rose remember it, and her cousins, and her friends. It was more than half due to her challenging gesture ; less than half because she didn't look the part, and because she had been "just Kass" to them for so long.

Independent though she was, Kathleen was always seeking for someone in immediate sympathy—someone to create for, someone to speak to in creating.

Her need was peculiar, and intimately her own. The warm immediate relation she sought was to be, as it were, the touchstone of her art-speech, to save it from the cynicism and bitterness which, she felt, were always threatening to engulf her. As intuitively she felt towards an art in accord with the simple miracle of human love, so instinctively she felt towards simple human affection as the soil in which alone her peculiar art could come to flower. What the relation meant for her she defined when writing of her husband thirteen years later. "In fact we are—apart from everything else—each other's *critic* in that he 'sees' me, I see myself reflected as more than I appear and yet not more than I AM, and so I believe it is with him." Someone in whom she could see herself reflected as more than she appeared, and yet not more than she was—someone in the security of whose affection she could let unfold the sensitive tendrils of childlike delight and childlike desire which were her essential and secret self—such a one she found at this barren moment in E.K.B. Years afterwards, when she would speak of E.K.B., the "special" note of tenderness would enter her voice, a sure witness to her abiding affection for one of the few friends she had known who had enabled her to be herself.

As early as 1901 Edith Bendall had made little water-colour sketches of dark Maori babies for Kass's album. Her ambition to be an artist—to draw children—had crystallised long before Kathleen Beauchamp's aim was focussed. She had a real flair for portraits of children ; they blossomed like

THE GROWING OF WINGS

flowers under her hand—so alive, so mobile, such minute individuals.

If she walked down Tinakori Road and saw a row of little round heads, like pale lanterns in the gloom of the Chinaman's Shop, or if she went into the country and saw Maori babies tumbling about an old *pah*, she could keep their faces individual and distinct in memory until she had painted them. Indeed, she could remember for years the face of a child who had delighted her.

She and Kathleen stimulated each other's observation—fanned the creative fire. Kathleen's interest in children was mainly artistic : she saw them as colour studies—bright butterfly bows hovering above the fringe and long curls (the fashion for children then). "The Little Girl with the Fringe" was the child who ran so lightly through those verses.

Kathleen, watching the children as she walked through the Botanical Gardens or down Lambton Quay, made mental notes for daily letters to E.K.B. In one she described a group on the Quay : a small red-haired girl in a green frock, sitting on the steps of a bead shop holding oranges in her lap, the envy of a small boy in a holland suit and his smaller sister emerging from an enormous pinafore—her "aggressive little braid" (like the triangular tail of a kitten) tied with a huge orange bow. Sympathetic Ida receiving letters that were "one long wail," might well have been astonished at these notes—so gay, brimming with colour, with tender amusement.

There had always been a baby in the Beauchamp home ; Kass knew children well. Jeanne—a quaint child in sunbonnets, a tiny thing with minute hands

and feet—had been heard to say : “Daddy’s afraid I’m going to be a dwarf.” Leslie “looked such a darling,” Kathleen thought, with his short fluff of curls and beaming smile under the huge straw hat he wore pushed far back. All of this Kass drew upon, in retrospect, in her poems. Her own childhood had been precious to her—secret, lonely, “behind the Blue Mountains.” It was a vivid memory, and being back in New Zealand after long absence brought back so much of her fanciful past : “the cabbage tree with its hair out of curl,” and “shadow children thin and small.” Her mind became a sensitive plate to such impressions. Every memory, every observation gave her ideas for a poem. If Jeanne had a new leather belt and pulled her waist in like a young lady, Kass said : “I must write a poem on that !” This ardour, so focussed, so stimulated by E.K.B.’s devotion, inspired a series of verses which (when they were posthumously published) Walter de la Mare called “as true to childhood as any child poems that we know.”

E.K.B. was able to share Kathleen’s retrospective childhood in another way : in the preference (which she still had) for very small things—some tiny shell found at the Bay, a minute flower that they could look down into and study—an unknown world which they entered by themselves.

Her friend was older than Kass. (She had no use for girls of her own age, except Maata, who also was living beyond her years.) E.K.B., who might herself have sat for a Wedgewood figure, thought Kathleen beautiful. One sketch, which she made of her while they were at the Bay, shows a round, thoughtful

THE GROWING OF WINGS

face with beautiful chiselled mouth, fine dark eyes, level brows, under a little winged Mercury hat. And E.K.B., like Ida, thought Kathleen's voice "wonderfully lovely—a voice that you couldn't forget." Unlike Matty, she remembered her as always laughing—effervescing with mischief and amusement over the comical situations she noticed when they were together, or which she saved to tell.

When the sketches and verses were finished, in June (1907), Kass copied out the poems in violet ink, in a leaping happy hand, and sent them with E.K.B.'s illustrations to an editor abroad.

The poems, alas, were rejected ; but they were at least returned. The drawings were irretrievably lost. Probably it was this total shipwreck of her hopes which caused Kathleen to turn ironically upon the whole affair. She had exposed herself, and been repaid for her folly. So she reacted by professing to regard the episode as an absurd and childish interlude.

Here are consecutive entries in the black Note Book :

" (June 29).

" I do not think I shall ever be able to write any child verse again. The faculty has gone, I *think*."

" (July).

" Now E.K.B. is a thing of the past . . . "

Yet, nearly a year later (April, 1908) she collaborated with her again, this time writing prose, reflecting once more something of her own childhood—the tender and lively sketches of *The Thoughtful Child*.

Though she was turning more and more toward writing, as time passed, Kathleen Beauchamp had by no means given up music. It was one of the bridges by which she could cross in an instant to London. Music and writing had, from the first, been associated in her mind—from that time when she was fourteen and composed her first booklet of verse, *Little Fronds*, on the *Niwaru*, after leaving Arnold Trowell in Wellington. Music stimulated her imagination—accelerated it; yet only writing quieted the violent surging within her.

“It is just eight o’clock” (she wrote in her Note Book) “Perhaps somewhere in the world he is waking or dressing, or playing or eating breakfast—and I am here— Well, greetings, Cæsar (A.T.) and a happy day to you. A letter from me arrives in London to-day. It is extraordinary to live so far from one’s other self—and yet each day to feel nearer as I feel— Everything about him seems to be more plain—now. I think of him in any, every situation—and I feel that understand him, too . . . I love him—but I wonder with all my soul—and here is the kernel of the whole matter—the Oscar-like thread—I want to practically celebrate this day by beginning to write a book. In my brain, as I walk each day, as I speak, or even before playing my ’cello, a thousand delicate images float and are gone. I want to write a book that is unreal, yet wholly possible—because out of the question—that raises in the hearts of the readers emotions, sensations too vivid not to have effect, which causes a thousand delicate tears, a thousand sweet chimes of laughter. I shall never attempt anything approaching the histrionic; and it must be ultra-modern. I am sitting right over the fire as I

THE GROWING OF WINGS

write, dreaming, my face hot with coals. Far away a steamer is calling, calling, and—God, God—my restless soul ! ! ! ”

During that year she had worked intermittently on the “ novel ” *Juliet*, completing the first chapters, writing snatches of chapters to follow, but she abandoned it now. As she looked back to survey the year just passed, she didn’t consider it even worth including in her year’s achievement :

“ June 25, 1907.

“ I hate everybody, loathe myself, loathe my life and love Cæsar (A.T.) Each week, sometimes every day—*tout dépend*—when I think of that fascinating cult which I wish to absorb me, I come to the conclusion that all this shall truly end. Liberty—no matter what the cost, no matter what the trial. I begin, hideously unhappy, make, God knows, how many resolves, and then break them ! One day I shall not do so.

“ I shall ‘ strike while the iron is white-hot,’ and praise myself and my unconquerable soul. From the amethyst outlook, the situation is devilishly fascinating, but it cannot be permanent. The charm consists mainly in its instability. I must wander ; I cannot—will not—build a house on any damned rock. But money, money, money is what I need and do not possess. I find a resemblance in myself to John Addington Symonds.

“ The day is white with frost ; a low blue mist lingers daintily among the pine avenue. It is very cold and there is a sharp sound of carts passing—quite early, too. A tram-whistle sounds ; a tram passes at the end of the street. The maids are putting away crockery. Downstairs in the music-room the ‘ cello is dreaming. I wonder if it shall be beneath the hands of its Master—I think not.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

"Well, a year has passed. What has happened? London behind me—Him behind me—Cæsar gone. My music has gained, become a thing of 10,000 times more beauty and strength. I myself have changed rather curiously. I am colossally interesting to myself. One fascinating Day has been mine. My friend sent me Sonia.

"And I have written a book of child verse. How *absurd*. But I am very glad; it is too exquisitely novel. And while my thoughts are redolent of purple daisies and white sweetness of gardenias, I present the world 'with this elegant thimble.' I have been engaged to a young Englishman for three weeks because his figure was so beautiful. I have been terribly foolish many times, especially with Oscar Fox and Siegfried Eichelbaum—but that is past. This year coming will be memorable. It will celebrate the Cultivation of the inert, the full flowering of the Gardenia. This time next year I shall have been born again."

Into this adolescent exoticism she reacted from the disappointment of her hopes for her book of verse. Meanwhile, as she waited for the realisation of her plans and dreams of returning to London, she filled the time, when she was not writing, with trio practices. Her friends, as they look back, remember her as "the 'cellist." Milly Parker, one of the musicians who played with her, describes her own impression so different from Matty's impression, or E.K.B.'s :

"Windy days and a 'cello is my first impression of her, for it was in Wellington and for trio practices that we met. A neighbour whose sons were at that time studying in Brussels, had received a composition from one of the boys (I remember the now noted 'cellist Mr. Arnold Trowell), a trio for violin, 'cello and piano.

THE GROWING OF WINGS

I was asked to help with the piano part, and with the proud parent of the young composer playing the violin, some tremendous practising was done. And so a delightful acquaintance began. Our neighbour removed his household to London shortly afterward, but from that time until seas came between us, Miss Beauchamp brought her 'cello to our home for practice every Thursday morning without fail.

"It is easy to remember her standing at the door, with rather an air of a wandering minstrel, strands of wind blown hair clinging to a little round hat, her 'cello slung by a strap over her shoulder. . . .

"I think of her dressed in brown, for she had a fancy to play in a frock that 'toned' with the 'cello, as though with a desire to merge herself with the instrument and that indeed was an understanding characteristic of her clever playing. Player and instrument were as one, and quaintly Bohemian, seeming almost a little foreign by way of strange temperament.

"At the time I knew her Kass Beauchamp was a remarkable 'cellist for the short period which she had then been studying the instrument, and she was a person of unexpected replies, too, I recall. To a party of friends one afternoon she played the Boellmann Variation Symphonique very beautifully. At the conclusion of the piece someone exclaimed, 'I do wish I could play the 'cello.' 'So do I!' was the quick response."

She alternated, in her work with Mr. Trowell, between the depths of discouragement and depression, and the heights of happiness and transport. She reflected in her playing, as in her writing, her state of mind, her mood of the moment, her ideal of herself or of Arnold. When she felt she was becoming a musician, and Mr. Trowell was pleased with her progress and talent, she soared on wings : when she

felt she was not growing at the swift pace she had set herself, she was desperate. In all this she was not unlike Marie Bashkirtseff—in those days at the studio when the Russian girl could be lifted to dizzy heights, or dashed to despair by the Master's word or look. Kathleen's was a different and more varied record; but the desperate struggle against being "nailed to the same place," the divination of the imperative need for a rapid, an early flowering of a life which was to be cut short, was paramount in both.

"Evening. June 25, 1907.

"All the morning I played very difficult music and was happy. In the afternoon came Cæsar's father and mother and sister. Cæsar's father and I played. I was unhappy. I did not play well; my hand and wrist hurt me horribly, and I did not feel that glorious hidden well of music deep in me. I was too sad. Cæsar's father depressed me. I felt that something was making him suffer, and I knew what it was; so I suffered, too. . . . I gave them a great bouquet of camellias to take home. I played a whole Bach concerto by sight, and Mr. T. had copied for me something beautiful. I am glad that it came into my life to-day. Then in the *Abenddämmerung* I went out into the streets. . . . It was so beautiful; the full moon was like a strain of music heard through a closed door. Mist over everything. The hills mere shadows to-night. I became terribly unhappy; I almost wept in the street; and yet music enveloped me again, caught me, held me, thank Heaven! I would have died, I should be dead but for that. I sent Mr. T. a beautiful book, something that I truly treasure."

"Aug. 27.

"A happy day. I have spent a perfect day" (she wrote in a leaping, happy hand). "Never have I

THE GROWING OF WINGS

loved Mr. Trowell so much, or felt so in accord with him, and my 'cello expressing everything. This morning we played Weber's Trio—tragic, fiercely dramatic, full of rhythm and accent. And then this afternoon, I became frightened. I felt that I had nothing to play—that I could not touch the concerto, that I had not improved. How horrible it was—yet the sunlight lay on the Music-room floor—and my 'cello was warm to touch. He came—and in the instant we understood each other and I think he was happy. O joyous time, it was almost inhuman—and to hear that, 'Bravely done—You've a real good grip of it all. Very good.' I would not have changed those words for all the laurel wreaths in existence. And to end with a Weber Fugue passage for first violin and then 'cello. It bit into my blood. Après we had tea and currant buns in the Smoking Room and ate to the accompaniment of the Fugue. And discussed Marriage and Music—the mistake that a woman makes ever to think she is first in a musician's estimation; it must inevitably be first his Art. I know; I understand; and also lack of sympathy. If I marry Cæsar—and I thought of him all the time—I think I could prove a great many things. Mr. Trowell said—'She must share his glories and always keep him on the heights.' . . . He could not infuse enough love into his voice this afternoon, nor I for him. Good evening—my Cæsar—To-night I shall speak through your music."

Crossing that silver bridge by her music—so swiftly, so lightly, was enough at isolated moments of rapture; but at night in her room when the windy, bracing day had passed, dark thoughts crowded upon her and she longed for something more. Then, not even writing could shut away loneliness; she might pour out all her ardent longing for London, but the words were cramped and

cold on the page. Well enough to write stories and sketches, or verse, by daylight ; but late at night only letters could suffice. Then it was she wrote so volubly to Ida, to Gwen, to Mimi, but most particularly to Arnold :

“ Sunday 11, VII. 07.

“ Beloved—Though I do not see you, know that I am yours—every thought—every feeling in me belongs to you—I wake in the morning and have been dreaming of you—and all through the day, while my outer life is going on steadily—monotonously, even drearily—my inner life I live with you—in leaps and bounds. I go through with you every phase of emotion that is possible—loving you. To me you are man, lover, artist, husband, friend—giving me all—and I surrendering you all—everything—And so this loneliness is not so terrible to me—because in reality my outer life is but a phantom life—a world of intangible, meaningless grey shadow—my inner life pulsates with sunshine and music and happiness—unlimited, vast unfathomable wells of happiness and *you*. One day we shall be together again and then—and then, only, I shall realise myself—shall come to my own—because I feel—I have always felt—that you hold in your hands—just those closing, final bars which leave my life song incomplete—because you are to me more necessary than anything else. Nothing matters—nothing *is* while you usurp my life—O—let it remain as it is. Do not suddenly crush out this, the beautiful flower—I am afraid—even while I am rejoicing. . . .

“ Kath Schönfeld.”

What she wrote in her Note Book during those days of impatient waiting for release made the time endurable ; they were not mere letters—were conversations, rather, as she weighed for herself the

THE GROWING OF WINGS

events of the day and the importance and meaning of all this in her life :

" Aug. 20, 1907.

" Rain beating upon the windows and a wind-storm violent and terrible. I came up into my room to go to bed—and suddenly—half undressed—I began thinking and looking at Cæsar's portrait—and wondering. Now I feel that I could have written : ' Beloved, I could bury my face in the pillow and weep and weep and weep. Here it is night and wind and the rain. You are in a flood of sunlight and daylight and the thunder of traffic—the (wave?) of life. I must possess it, too—I must suffer and conquer—I must leave here—I cannot look ahead into the unutterable grey vastness of misty future years. Do you know that you are all in all—you *are* my Life. . . . I am bored and miserable to-night, so forgive me. I am sick of barrenness and I want to laugh and I want to listen—Words will not be found—but how I *feel*, and now to bed, hopefully to lie and look into the darkness and think, and weave beautiful scarlet patterns—and *hope* to dream— My 'cello is better, but I fancy Mr. Trowell is annoyed with me. That must not happen. What is to become of us *all*—I am so eager—and yet that is all—*Buon ripose*."

Then there came a letter that for the time changed everything—about Arnold Trowell. Ida was faithfully sending Kathleen cuttings from London papers, notices of his recitals. When he played, she gleaned every morning and evening paper, carefully labelling notices even of three lines. If she heard any word of him, she sent it speedily. On August 28th, the mail brought particular news from her ; Arnold said, later, that she had been misinformed, but Kathleen could not know that, then. It was one

of those times when a letter seemed to shatter her world :

“ Aug. 28.

“ I had a letter from *Adeläida* to-day about Arnold Trowell— And at present I have no idea how I felt. First so sorrowful, so hurt, so pained—that I contemplated the most outrageous things ; but now only *old* and angry and lonely, and as though everything except my 'cello had lost its interest for me—Now what is it to be ? Shall I applaud him in his manner of living— Shall I say—Do as you please—Live as you like—See Life—gain Experience, increase your outlook, or shall I condemn it. This is how I think. It's a great pity that artists do live so. But as they do—*well*—— But I shall not.”

"Ambition is a curse if you are not . . . proof against everything else, unless you are willing to sacrifice yourself to your ambition."—K.M. (*Note Book*, 1907.)

I

EVEN in these early years she was torn—like that other Katya (of *The Tedious Story*), and like Marie Bashkirtseff—by the conflict peculiar to one having the temperament and the ideals of genius. In her very ardour to achieve, she was paralysed at times by what Baudelaire called *la stérilité des écrivains nerveux*. It was not until, like Blake, she had passed through innocence to experience, and through experience to a new innocence again that she could write as easily and naturally as a bird sings; not because she wanted to be a writer, but because she wanted to write. During these early years, she was in the throes of a power too strong for her. She had not yet known—except at a few rare happy instants—

" . . . the moment when the act of creation takes place—the mysterious change—when you are no longer writing the book, *it* is writing, *it* possesses you."

Letters were always her means of "taking the soundings." To Ida alone during those two years she wrote a packet more than a foot square. Ten years later, looking through them hurriedly, she

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

said : " This is such young, unformed work ; there's no time to sort it ; let's destroy it all." And though Ida had guarded them preciousely for ten years, she answered gently : " They belong to you, Katie," and helped her burn them—too many for a fireplace—in a garden bonfire. Those letters were " just one long wail "—all the unhappy aspects of her existence. When she had put, in one of them, a laughing picture of herself with Chummie and little Jeanne, Ida wrote back : " But how can you *laugh* ! "

Her own room was by no means the only place where she wrote ; as she wrote every day, so she wrote everywhere. The Note Books that always went with her, a very part of herself, are eloquent of the tremendous efforts she was continually making " to become a writer " ; of her anxiety concerning her talent and her possibilities of achievement :

" i. x. 1906.

" I am full of ideas tonight. And they must at all costs germinate. I have seen enough to make me full of fancy. I should like to write something so beautiful, and yet modern, and yet student-like and full of summer. . . .

" Now truly I ought to be able, but I don't feel by any means confident. Oh, do let me write something really good, let me sketch an idea and work it out. Here is silence and peace and splendour—bush and birds. Far away I hear builders at work upon a house—and the tram sends me half crazy. Let it be a poem. . . .

" And I *shall* do well. Bright sunshine, now. I am glad. It will be a beautiful afternoon—but, I pray you, *let me write*."

FIRST SHORT STORIES

"Dec. 28.

" . . . I ought to make a good author. I certainly have the ambition and the ideas, but have I the power to carry me all through? Yes. . . ."

"I have read enough for this afternoon. Now I want to write. Shall I be able I wonder? Here is the attempt.

"I can write nothing at all. I have many ideas but no grip of any subject. I want to write verses—but they won't come. . . . I cannot get a charming effect anyway. It's hatefully annoying and disheartening. But there is nothing like trying, so I shall make a further attempt. I should like to write something just a trifle mysterious—but really very beautiful and original.

"*The Growing of Wings.*

"Try to make some sort of sketch of the whole. It will be far simpler—so to speak—block it in—— For instance place your characters carefully and completely—She is born in New Zealand. At the death of her Father she is sent to London to Miss Pitts who keeps a boarding house for the young girls who wish to study at the various colleges. Here is the opportunity for sketching in say—a pal. . . . Constance Foster and Miss Manners. They are taken by Miss Manners to see her nephew Paul Hardy—author."

Even at that time—when she was between eighteen and twenty—she seemed to be turning definitely toward the short story form; and though she wrote sketches with such facility, there seemed always the one story haunting her—the story of her birth in the storm, and her early life in New Zealand. Again and again she started it in her Note Books; and those abandoned beginnings are significant not only of the immediate influences working upon her—the mark of her reading, the effect of her study of

style, her sensitiveness to delicate atmosphere, to ironic overtones ; but also of the manner in which she modified characters whom she knew to meet artistic demand :

“ I should like to write a life much in the style of Walter Pater’s *Child in the House*. About a girl in Wellington ; the singular charm and barrenness of that place—with climatic affects—wind, rain, spring, night—the sea, the cloud—beauty. And then to leave the place and go to Europe. To live there a real existence—to go back and be utterly disillusioned, to find out the truth of all—to return to London—to live there an existence so full and so strange that life itself seemed to greet her—and ill to the point of death return to W. and die there. The story—no, it would be a sketch, hardly that, more a psychological study—of the most () character. I should fill it with sinister disturbance and also of the strange longing for the artificial. I should call it *Strife*—and the child I should call—Ah, I have it—I’d make her a half-cast Maori and call her *Maata*. Bring into it *Hasbrick* the guide.”

And when this story would not grow, she was thrown into black fits of depression, into dark moods of restlessness ; just as, when a story flowered, she was released again happy and free. But she had to wait for maturity—until she could look back upon her childhood from innumerable points of exile—before this story could be written.

No time or place seemed impossible for her writing. She had a special “ corner ” of her own in the Parliamentary Library where she was made to feel at home. She wrote on a moving caravan—scrawled pencil jottings of all she saw on the journey through the wild King Country in November.

FIRST SHORT STORIES

She wrote as they returned on the train—as, invariably, when travelling alone, she jotted descriptions of her compartment companions. While she waited for a concert to begin (Clara Butt and Kennerley Rumford, who were touring Wellington) she described acquaintances in the music hall, and then began a new chapter of her “novel” *Juliet*; as when waiting for Arnold Trowell to play in London, she had scrawled a note of the audience, and his probable state of mind :

“There are a more or less large number of weak looking females waiting here of the slightly mushroom hat type—the flannel coat and skirt type. I feel rather self-conscious, so I doubtless look arrogant. No other man to be seen. What must the feeling of the Master be. In two hours he will be playing. Does that excite him—is he too blasé for excitement—Is he looking at his fiddle—calling out—lifting—the lid of his case—— Yet I think not—or he is eating the proverbial Sausage with his . . .”

She scribbled a letter in German to Arnold while she was waiting for someone before the Court House in Wellington. Alone in the Library at home in Fitzherbert Terrace, she experimented with several versions of a *Vignette*—the view from the window.

It was her custom, in those days (in composing one of the slight sketches which she called *Vignettes*), to write the first draft quickly under the impulse of her original idea; then to experiment with it—crossing out words and lines, revising the first text; later to rewrite completely, retaining only certain sentences and phrases from the first draft—really giving the idea a new chance to form itself.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

In this same manner she wrote in the Day's Bay cabin, and at Island Bay (where she told Matty she was going "to the sea for copy") :

"Thursday (Feb.)

"I am at the sea—at Island Bay, in fact—lying flat on my face on the warm white sand. And before me the sea stretches.

"To my right—shrouded in mist, like a fairy land—a dream country—the snow mountains of the South Island ; to my left fold upon fold of splendid golden hills. Two white light-houses, like great watching birds perched upon them. A huge yellow dog lies by me. He is wet and ruffled and I have no boots or stockings on—a pink dress—a panama hat—a big parasol. *Adeläida*, I wish that you were with me.

"Where the rocks lie their shadow is thickly violet upon the green blue—you know that peacock shade of water. Blueness—with the blueness of Rossetti—green with the greenness of William Morris. Oh, what a glorious day this is. I shall stay here until after dark—walking along the beach—the waves going over my feet—drinking a great deal of tea—and eating a preposterous amount of bread and apricot jam at a little place called the Cliff House. Across the blue sea a boat is floating with an orange sail. Now the Maori fishermen are sailing in—their white sail bellying in the wind. On the beach a group of them—with blue jerseys, thick trousers rolled to their knees. The sun shines on their thick crisp hair—and shines on their faces so that their skins are the colour of hot amber. It shines on their brown arms—bare legs. They are drawing in a little boat called *To Kooti*, the wet rope running through their fingers and falling in a mystic pattern on the foam blown sand."

This was refashioned into this *Vignette* :

"Evening By the Sea.

"Lying thus on the sand—the foam almost washing over my hands I feel the magic of the sea. Behind the

FIRST SHORT STORIES

golden hills the sun is going down—a ruby jewel in a luminous setting—and there is a faint flush everywhere over sea and land. To my right the sky has blossomed into vivid rose, but to my left the land is hidden by a grey blue mist—here and there a suggestion of sun colour. It is like land seen from a ship—a very long far away oceanland—mirage—enchanted country. I see birds—high in the air—fly screaming toward the light. It beats upon their white crests; it flames upon their dull wings.

“Far away a little boat is sailing in the sweet water. And now the Italian fishermen are sailing in—their white sail bellying in the breeze. Several come rowing in a little boat. They spring ashore. The sun shines on their crisp black hair—it shines on their faces so that their skin is the colour of hot amber—on their bare legs and strong bare arms. They are dragging towards them their boat. The long black wet rope running through their fingers—falling in a mystic pattern on the foam blown sand.

“They call to one another. I cannot hear what they say, but against the long rhythmic pulse of the sea, their voices sound curiously mystical like voices in a dream.

“And there are exquisite golden brown sprays and garlands of seaweed—set about with berries white and brown. Are they flowers blown from the garden of the sea king’s daughter—does she wander through the delicate coral forest seeing them—her long hair floating behind . . . playing upon a little silver shell?

“And near me I see a light upon the blue coast—steadily, tenderly luminous a little candle set upon the great altar of the world. The glow pales in the sky—on the land—but the voice of the sea grows stronger. Oh, to sail and sail with the heart of the sea—It is darkness and silence.”

Revised yet again, this *Vignette* was one of the sheaf which she sent to her friends in England.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

She had to keep in *touch* during this time. It was always so. She asked, years later : " To whom did I always write when I kept those huge, complaining diaries ? Was it to myself ? "

At this time Kathleen practised writing, as she practised music. The method is not common among writers, though it has the authority of Robert Louis Stevenson. But it was not from him that Kathleen derived it. Partly, no doubt, it was instinctive ; but the main influence seems to have been the fact that her first serious artistic passion was music. When she turned to writing she carried over to it her habits as a musical student. And since she probably felt that a musician would have a natural understanding of her method, it is from her musician-friend, Milly Parker, that we have a first-hand description of it.

" . . . We named the flowers she brought each week. I remember two glorious tulips, one a great rich brown satin fellow, the other a smart little scarlet bud, thin and perky—'Dignity and Impudence.' This finding of names for the flowers prompted us to spend a day in the Wellington Botanical Gardens for the purpose of writing down what we saw. We came to a new fence, I remember—upright posts at even intervals apart, and 5 rails across. Just in front of it a bed of young cabbage trees reared their round heads at varying heights. In a flash she saw it as a line of music, the fence the stave, the heads of the cabbage trees the notes, on the line and in the spaces. There being no clef mark, we hummed the melody through first as treble, then as bass, but found no tune either way, so it was put down as ' a strange native patterning melody.'

" On the slope of a hill a man was busy burning

FIRST SHORT STORIES

scrub: 'a vigorous figure in blue smoke,' she jotted down as we walked by. Though she read aloud much of her work that day I remember only those two phrases . . .

"She was at that time only about eighteen but very mature and experienced for her age and often delighted and amused when people mistook her age for twenty-eight. Her handwriting too, looked more like twenty-eight than eighteen. There was an unusual forcibleness in its emphasis, very like a man's writing, with odd kinks that gave it a rather hieroglyphic effect, though always quite legible.

"I have come across a piece of music, a gift from her, inscribed in her interesting looking handwriting. 'With best wishes from the 'cello,' and also a leaf from an autograph book. An accident spoilt this book years ago, but before destroying it I removed one sheet, K. Mansfield's contribution. I still have it. We had raced through the Goltermann concerto at a terrific pace and had gone out on the balcony to get cool. There the roses were in bloom, and in an ecstasy of delight she pronounced the following lines, whether actually extempore, I did not think to ask.

"Red as the wine of forgotten ages,
Yellow as gold by the sunbeams spun,
Pink as the gowns of Aurora's pages,
White as the robe of a sinless one,
Sweeter than Araby's winds that blow,
Roses ! Roses ! I love you so !

"I asked her to write them in my book, which she did, adding below the following :

"It cannot be possible to go through all the abandonment of music and care humanly for anything human afterwards.

"K. Mansfield, 1908.

"I remember her remarking about the signature 'K. Mansfield,' for it was the first time I had seen it.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

She had been writing as Julian Mark for the *Native Companion*, a Magazine which was then being published in Melbourne."

2

It happened to be her father who was indirectly responsible for the paid publication of Katherine Mansfield's first short stories—when she was eighteen.

She had been writing what her Wellington acquaintances called "stories of the sex-interest type." The justification for the description was slight. True, she was inclined towards the exoticism of the 'nineties, which represented for her, as for many others of her age and generation, the vindication of art against the Philistine. Since New Zealand was, in her eyes, in comparison with London, Philistia itself, she leaned more heavily towards the 'nineties than she would otherwise have done. The exotic perfume was very noticeable in the New Zealand atmosphere; and it was labelled "sex-interest." The same label, we may be sure, would have been attached indiscriminately to Flaubert and Hardy, to Tolstoy and Tchekhov.

New Zealand had had no time for modern literature. Its literary classifications were simple: as simple as good and bad. Writing was either "pretty and sweet," or "sexy" and horrible. It was very obvious to which kind Katherine Mansfield's belonged. There was a legend current at the time concerning a story of hers called *From my Bedroom Window*, which was rumoured to have been published in some New Zealand newspaper—a story

FIRST SHORT STORIES

of lovers overheard talking on a bench in Fitzherbert Terrace. This story was reputed to have burst on the community like a bomb. "A nice sweet young girl to have such thoughts!"

It is fairly certain that the story had no existence, though, as we shall see, there was something out of which eager scandal-mongers may have fashioned it for themselves. But the legend lasted for years. It seems to have been chiefly born of a scandalised apprehension of moral outrage, lurking always in the fact that Kathleen claimed the freedom of an artist. The very conception was outside the range of contemporary New Zealand. The books which she had read were quite unknown to them; they were completely unprepared for the liberties of the artist. To them, with their curtailed opportunities for making the acquaintance of "modern" literature, it seemed that Kathleen was a pioneer of what appeared to them literary licence: that she had *invented* freedom of speech in fiction.

When a young New Zealand journalist remarked that "she wrote like a mature and widely experienced woman of thirty," he might have found had he searched for it—that "wide experience of life" dormant between the covers of the books in Kathleen Beauchamp's studio-room. This secret, closed from him, and other Wellington contemporaries, was indicated in the first paragraph of one of her stories, printed at that time, *In a Café*:

"Each day they walked down Bond Street together, between the hours of twelve and one, and turned in at the Blenheim Café for lunch and conversation. She, a pale, dark girl, with that unmistakable air of

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

'acquaintance with life' which is so general among the students in London and an expression at once of intense eagerness and anticipated disillusion. Life to a girl who had read Nietzsche, Eugene Sue, Baudelaire, D'Annunzio, Barrès, Catulle Mendès, Sudermann, Ibsen, Tolstoi, was, in her opinion, no longer complex, but a trifle obvious . . . "

Kathleen had showed her sheaf of stories to several friends whom she hoped might help her with publication. Among others, she took them to a young journalist who admired her work but was in no position, then, to aid her; and one of the musicians who played in her trio—a fastidious, highly sensitive woman, older than herself. Even she was shocked. "But, Katie!" she said in consternation, "*In a Garret* is beyond words! How do you *know* such things?"

"I just know them," Kass answered. "That is *life*."

"She was like the ultra-modern painters," her friend said afterwards. "She had to have all barriers down before she could do new things. And her quality of imagination was such that it was difficult to tell where truth ended and imagination began."

True it was that she tinged her anecdotes with colour all her own; she gave them form and substance—sensing the dramatic possibilities of the immediate situation, and the responsiveness of her audience. The anecdote had been formed by wit and invention, before she had done with it; for even then she was telling her story as a writer.

First success came upon her in the most unexpected manner. Her father said casually, *à propos* of

FIRST SHORT STORIES

nothing : “ Re your stories, Katie, I saw young Mills to-day at a match. I told him I thought you’d been spoiling paper long enough, but your mother was sympathetic ; I asked him if he still ran the literary page of *The New Zealand Mail*. He said, ‘ No. Why ? ’ I told him I remembered he used to read MSS. of young writers as a feature of the page, and wondered if he ever read them now. He said, ‘ Yes, whenever they happen along.’ So I said you were following ‘ Elizabeth’s ’ footsteps, but hadn’t got out of the bush, and I asked him if he’d read some of your stuff.”

She went up to her room and shut herself into her own world, spread out the big black Note Book and the smaller Black Note Books scrawled heavily with violet ink, and read everything with a newly critical eye. She even went back through the Queen’s College years, re-reading sketches and jottings, and the verses in *Little Fronds*. Nothing was good enough. None would do. She put away the long sheets of foolscap upon which she meant to copy out something for Tom Mills. She would have to write all new ones.

From the sheets she destroyed during the next weeks she saved a series of brief sketches—hardly stories—*Vignettes* she called them—and two poems like those written with E.K.B. So much time had elapsed between her father’s meeting Tom Mills and her mailing the sheaf of MSS. that he had completely forgotten the incident.

A few days later, however, he rang her up to make an appointment for afternoon tea.

“ But how shall I know you ? ” Kass cried.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

"Watch for a slim fellow wearing a split hat, and with a handkerchief wrapped around his left hand," said the voice in her ear; "then you stand up at your table in the D.I.C."

What he had to tell her was this: he thought the verses "the sweetest songs of childhood" he had ever read; "the six stories—of the sex-problem type . . . a matured and widely experienced woman of thirty might have written."

He added, long afterward, that "the psychology of Katherine Mansfield in her teens was remarkably precocious." He made much the same remark to her—after he knew her rather better—and added: "I don't like your preference for the sex-problem story."

"That is *my* business," she retorted quickly. "It is none of *your* business what I write about, but merely to assure me that I can write successfully."

He didn't argue the matter; neither did she.

"Another outstanding feature," he continued, "is the spirit of London in the sketches."

"London is my Ultima Thule," she answered hotly.

"As to their publication," he told her, "there are very few publishers in the world to-day who would either buy or publish such tales."

"I don't want to be paid for the writing," Kass answered quickly. "I want to prove to the family that my writing is worth while."

"Then send them out for publication. You will not only confirm my own opinion, but you will realise the very best criticism—payment for work."

"But where shall I send them?"

FIRST SHORT STORIES

"There's a monthly magazine in Melbourne," said Mills, "that takes the sex story—*The Native Companion*, edited by E. J. Brady. Send three of the sketches there, and three to a London Magazine."

Kathleen knew that for such an experiment they must be typed. Her father had bought her a little-used Fox machine which she meant to master some time ; but she was too impatient for results to go through the arduous process of typing. The appearance of her written page was important to her ; once it was copied, it no longer seemed her own ; yet she knew how difficult her script was to read.

She remembered Mattie, her father's secretary. But the matter needed delicate handling ! She divined something of what actually did happen—several years later—when *In a German Pension* reached Wellington :

"This would never uplift anybody," Mattie remarked to Kathleen's father, returning the book to him.

"Her thoughts were always in a minor key, even as a child," Mr. Beauchamp said diplomatically.

That Kathleen was fully capable of handling the immediate situation, however, is apparent in the notes she left for Mattie with the various MSS. she wanted to have typed. They are characteristic of a certain diplomacy to which she had recourse throughout her life.

"47 Fitzherbert Terrace.

"22. vii. 07.

"Thank you very much indeed for the 'Poor Child'—Mattie. I am most grateful—

"Yes—I quite agree that she was—to say the least—

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

rather a morbid little individual—but to write—she was *most* fascinating. Never mind—soon I shall write some Poems full of cheerfulness—though to tell you a secret I prefer the others—the tragic pessimism of youth—you see—is as inevitable as the measles !

“ I send you the sheet—it ought to read—‘ She and the Boy’ . . . and that is all—

“ It is so fine to see my children in such an abnormally healthy—clean—tidy condition—

“ Thank you for that—

“ Yours sincerely

“ Kathleen Beauchamp.”

“ Friday.

“ This is written specially for you—a sort of continuation of the last at least it is the same style. Could you—any time type it for me—dear, and I do hope you will like the man, because I think he is a dear. On one place you will see a sign (*) where I left out a sentence— I’ve just written it in on the back of that page.

“ What weather ! Winter or Autumn I think.

“ I’d like to go with you to a concert this afternoon Mark Hambourg & Gerardy. Wouldn’t it be *fine*.

“ Yours with love

“ K.”

“ Sunday Night.

“ My dear,

“ Here is the work—it is written really in a ‘ faire hand ’ and will I hope not be too much of a bother. I’m afraid you won’t like ‘ —Amore.’ I can’t think how I wrote it—it’s partly a sort of a dream. Castles have been tumbling about my ears since Father came home. Do not mention—I pray you—my London prospects to him—he feels very sensitive—but—willy nilly I go I’m determined.

“ I wish that you were not always so busy. I always feel when I am with you that theres so much I want to say—oh delightful sensation *and so rare*.

FIRST SHORT STORIES

"Well I must go to but—shall I build a castle with a spare room for you. Yes I will—so please return the complement.

"Thanking you in anticipation.

"K."

"47 Fitzherbert Terrace.

"Am I asking too great a favour—when I say—could you type this for me my dear. I feel horrid to do so but really I will make it the last and conquer my Fox machine if I die in the effort! But my Editor wants something for a Summer Number ∴ the haste. If its impossible for you just send it back by Father and I shall understand. Are you better? I hope so—And here is a man that you will like—will you—I wonder? Hmm!

"Yours a little nervously

"Kathleen."

"Thursday

"Thank you indeed for *Audrey*—It was most good of you to bother about her at all—And you have typed it so beautifully for me. Is your room a success? I do hope so—Of course you have been busy lately—and so have I in a very pleasant sort of way—writing I mean. I am just off to Island Bay for a long day and maybe an evening—I am going to write and have to go to the sea for copy—*Do* bring a book and come—too—Dear—and we shall 'paddle' and 'bathe'—Don't you *love* the two processes?

"I wonder if you have read *Lube Delinge* by Father Sheehan—Father Macdonald lent it to me—some days ago—and it is very good—Oh, what a *beautiful* day—

"Thank you again—Dear—I feel most horrid to have bothered you so persistently about my annoying children . . . You have indeed been a godmother to them—and they—too—are grateful—

"Lovingly yours

"K."

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

The editor of *The Native Companion*, Mr. E. J. Brady, accepted three from the sheaf of sketches which Mattie had typed and which Kathleen had sent him in Melbourne: a *Vignette*, hovering in atmosphere between Wellington and London; a *Silhouette*, a picture from the window of Fitzherbert Terrace; and *In a Café* set in London. These appeared almost immediately in consecutive issues of the magazine for October, November and December, 1907. Mr. Brady was so impressed by them that he preserved two letters which Kathleen sent him. The first was in reply to his letter of acceptance.

“ 47 Fitzherbert Terrace
“ Wellington.

“ 23. ix. 07.

“ F. J. Brady, Esq.

“ Dear Sir—

“ Thank you for your letter—I liked the peremptory tone—With regard to the *Vignettes* I am sorry that (they) resemble their illustrious relatives to so marked an extent—and assure you—they feel very much my own—This style of work absorbs me at present but—well—it *cannot* be said that anything you have of mine is ‘copied’—Frankly—I hate plagiarism.

“ I send you some more work—practically there is nothing local—except the ‘Botanical Gardens’ *Vignette*. The reason is that for the last few years London has held me very tightly—and I’ve not yet escaped.

“ You ask for some details as to myself. I am poor—obscure—just eighteen years of age—with a voracious appetite for everything—and principles as light as my prose—

“ If this pleases you—this MSS.—please know there is a great deal more where this came from—

FIRST SHORT STORIES

"I am very grateful to you and very interested in your magazine—

"Sincerely

"K. M. Beauchamp."

Her letter reveals the marks left by *Dorian Gray*. When she, rather rashly, wrote that she was a person "with principles as light as my prose," she was echoing and improving upon the sentences of Wilde which she had already copied into her reading notes: "I like persons with no principles better than anything in the world."

Evidently her statement of her age aroused Mr. Brady's suspicions. If she really was only eighteen—he seems to have argued—then her work could not be original. But probably she was a great deal more than eighteen—the mature woman of thirty whom Tom Mills had conjured up. Kathleen showed a letter expressing these doubts to her father. His reply (written without her knowledge) was also preserved by Mr. Brady.

"W. M. Bannatyne & Co., Ltd.

"10th Octbr., 1907.

"Dear Sir :—

"My daughter, Kathleen, has shown me the letters you have written in respect to her literary contributions, and I desire to thank you sincerely for the practical encouragement you have given her. At the same time, I should like to assure you that you need never have any hesitation in accepting anything from her upon the assumption that it may not be original matter. She, herself, is, I think, a very original character, and writing—whether it be good or bad—comes to her quite naturally. In fact, since she was eight years of age, she has been producing poetry and prose. It may be that she inherits the literary talent

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

of some members of our family, amongst them being my cousin, the authoress of *Elizabeth and her German Garden*, and other well-known books.

"As to Kathleen's statement concerning her age, this, I notice, you politely question, but I can assure you that she spoke quite correctly when she told you she was only eighteen years old.

"Until the close of 1906 she was a student at a college in London, and left that institution to return to New Zealand with me, and other members of my family, in October of that year. I may add that she has always been an omnivorous reader, and possesses a most retentive memory.

"Pardon me for troubling you with these details, but I wished to deal with the two points raised in your kind letter, viz., 'originality' and 'age.'

"In concluding, may I ask you to be kind enough to treat this as a private letter and not to mention to Kathleen that I have written you concerning her.

"I am,

"Yours very truly

"Harold Beauchamp."

The encouragement had been practical indeed, in a form convincing to her father—a cheque, which Kathleen promptly acknowledged.

"4 Fitzherbert Terrace

"Wellington—

"11, x, 07.

"Dear Mr. Brady

"Thank you for your note—and the cheque—too—

"Encouragement has studiously passed me by for so long that I am very appreciative.

"I like the name 'Silhouette'—If you do print more than one 'Vignette' in the November issue—please do not use the name K. M. Beauchamp. I am anxious to be read only as K. Mansfield or K. M.

"Mr. Brady—I am afraid that so much kindness

FIRST SHORT STORIES

on your part may result in an inundation of MSS. from me—but the kindness is very pleasant.

“ Sincerely

“ Kathleen Beauchamp.”

The selection of a pen-name cost her no little effort. She was determined not to use her own. She meant to leave the old life completely, once she was free, and in London ; and for a new life—to which her now published writing might open the door—she needed a new name. And, no doubt, she was partly influenced by the example of her father's cousin, who had achieved world-wide fame with a series of anonymous books (of which the sixth had just been published).

Kathleen tried several experiments : first “ Julian Mark ” (in the rhythm of “ Dorian Gray ”) ; the German form of her own name, “ Kath Schönfeld ” (which she had used in corresponding in German with Arnold Trowell while he was in Brussels) ; and “ K. Mansfield.” That she decided permanently upon her second Christian name, her Grandmother's name—Mansfield—may have been due to something which recently had happened.

The Grandmother had been living with a friend in Bolton Street, off Hill Street since the girls' return from London. Time flew swiftly—Kathleen was always meaning to stop to see her.

At a quarter to twelve, the last few minutes before the New Year of 1907, Grandmother Mansfield Dyer had a stroke.

Kathleen never forgave herself for being so wrapped in her own problems that she had let the time pass until too late. She was not devoid of

sentiment. Death always made her keenly conscious of the essence of a personality, and this was her first experience of the death of one dear to her.

But it was not until she began writing for the *New Age*, in 1910, that she returned to the form Katherine—after experimenting with “Katherina” and “Katharina.”

For these first stories, submitted to *The Native Companion*, she asked “to be read only as K. Mansfield or K.M.” and how eagerly she awaited the first publication !

“It seems strange to remember buying a copy of *The Native Companion* on Lambton Quay and standing under a lamppost with darling Leslie to see if my story had been printed.”

Under this new incentive she wrote continuously—of the City in which she lived her detached existence—of cafés, and “life” : the girl who bought Parma violets instead of a bun ; and the girl who—having given the violets to a boy who begged them—found them discarded on the street. She wrote of “Mimi,” and the long stairs to the top of Westminster, and the delicate images floating before them as they gazed over London—wondering how long they would remember. She wrote of Gwen, and the dreams they had for fame in the future.

She sent copies of stories to each of them, so they should see how London was loved, and they, too, being part of it. The mails to Arnold, to Ida, to “Mimi,” and Gwen, to Sylvia were heavy with these stories, and with letters that often reached ten pages. How could the days have been long enough for so much writing ? With what facility she wrote

when the mood was right ! And how fully and poignantly she wrote when she was unhappy ! For she was one who grew most quickly under pressure of unhappiness. Since she was willing, from that moment onward, to sacrifice to writing almost every other thing that life was to hold—so she owed to adversity and heartbreak the fulfilment of her one consuming wish : “ to become a writer.”

“ *Silhouettes.*

“ It is evening and very cold. From my window the laurestinus bush, in this half light looks weighted with snow. It moves languidly, gently, backwards and forwards, and each time I look at it a delicate flower melody fills my brain.

“ Against the pearl sky the great hills tower, gorse-covered, leonine, magnificently savage. The air is quiet with thin rain, yet, from the karaka tree comes a tremulous sound of birds song.

“ In the avenue three little boys are crouched under a tree smoking cigarettes. They are quite silent, and though terrified of discovery, their attitudes are full of luxurious abandon. . . . And the grey smoke floats into the air—their incense, strong and perfumed, to the Great God of the Forbidden.

“ Two men pass down the avenue talking eagerly. . . . In the house opposite are four beautiful squares of golden light. . . . My room is almost in darkness. The bed frightens me—it is so long and white. And the tassel of the window blind moves languidly to and fro. I cannot believe that it is not some living thing . . .

“ It is growing very dark. The little boys, laughing shrilly, have left the avenue.

“ And I, leaning out of my window, alone, peering into the gloom, am seized by a passionate desire for everything that is hidden and forbidden. I want the night to come, and kiss me with her hot mouth, and

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

lead me through an amethyst twilight to the place of the white gardenia. The laurestinus bush moves languidly, gently, backwards and forwards. There is a dull, heavy sound of clocks striking far away, and, in my room, darkness, emptiness, save for the ghost-like bed. I feel to lie there quiet, silent, passively cold would be too fearful—yet—quite a little fascinating.

“ K. Mansfield.”

(*The Native Companion*, November, 1907.)

It is just conceivable that this is the “ story ” which burst like a bombshell on New Zealand. Granted a certain amount of enthusiastic amplification over tea-tables, the first lines of the final paragraph might be swelled into the monster of New Zealand legend.

"It seems impossible for spirits of any magnitude to live more than a few years upon this earth without having forced upon them the necessity for self-assertion, and with self-assertion begins struggle and disappointment, not only with the world, but with themselves and those most deeply loved."—Joseph Wicksteed (*Blake's Songs of Innocence and Experience.*)

I

MR. AND MRS. TROWELL were sailing for London. They were her last tangible link with London ; and it was breaking. Wellington without them seemed so disastrous that it didn't bear thinking about. Now had come the time to gather all forces for the one last desperate dash for freedom—into what ? Kathleen Beauchamp longed to pierce through the inscrutable :

"2nd Sept., 1907.

"O let me lift it, ever so slightly. It hangs before me—ever—heavy, motionless—this curtain which veils the future. Let me just hold a corner up and peep beyond. Then maybe I shall be content. They leave N.Z. all of them, my people—My Father—It has come, of course. I used to think—so long as they are here, I can bear it. And now—I shall somehow or other go too—You just see !"

She writes to him, just before he went :

"My dear Mr. Trowell—

"I cannot let you leave without telling you how grateful I am and must be all my life for what you have

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

done for me and given me. You have shown me that there is something so immensely higher and greater than I had ever realised before in music, and therefore too, in life.

"Do you know, so many times when you have been with me, I have felt that I must tell you that when I came from England, friendless and sorrowful, you changed all my life. And music, which meant much to me before in a vague, desultory fashion, is now fraught with meaning.

"Please, I want you to remember that all my life I am being grateful and happy and proud to have known you. Looking back, I have been so stupid, and you so patient. I think of that little canon of Cherubini's as a gate, opened with so much difficulty and leading to so wide a road.

"I wish you everything with both hands and all my heart. What I look forward to as the greatest joy I can imagine is to share a program with you at a London concert."

By the end of October (1907) her state of desperation was bearing her away on a flood tide beyond even her own control. She felt not only the division in her life, rendering both halves useless, but she was suffocated by the realisation that time was passing quickly, and all her powers, all her talents, lying dormant. That force within her, impelling her to take life quickly, to live it to its full before it was out of her grasp, goaded her, until she was "in a fever of living":

"21. X. 07.

". . . I shall certainly not be here much longer. Thank Heaven for that! Even when I am alone in my room, they come outside and call to each other, discuss the butcher's orders or the soiled linen and—I feel—wreck my life. It is so humiliating. And

this morning I do not wish to write, but to read Marie Bashkirtseff. But if they enter the room and find me merely with a book, their tragic, complaining looks upset me altogether.

"Here in my room I feel as though I was in London—in London. To write the word makes me feel that I could burst into tears. Isn't it terrible to love anything so much? I do not care at all for men, but *London*—it is Life. . . . I am longing to consort with my superiors. What is it with me? Am I absolutely nobody, but merely inordinately vain? I do not know. . . . But I am most fearfully unhappy. That is all. I am so unhappy that I wish I was dead—yet I should be mad to die when I have not yet lived *at all*.

"Well, I have sat here for two hours and read. My right hand is quite cold. . . . If she comes into the room I sit on the Marie Bashkirtseff and seize my pen. She leans against the door rattling the handle and says:—'Are you writing a colossal thing—or an ordinary thing—or any thing exciting?' How completely inane! I tell her to leave the room *at once*. Now if this door would open and Mimi walk in, Mimi or Ida or my charming Gwen—how happy I should be—with all three I can be myself. Outside the window there is a lumbering sound of trams and a sound of birds' song. Now here comes tea, and I fall to the temptation—as usual.

"I am so damnably thankful that I did not allow J. to kiss me. I am constantly hearing of him, and I feel to meet him would be horrible. But why? It is ridiculous. I used him merely for copy. I am always so supremely afraid of appearing ridiculous—the feeling is fostered by Oscar—who was so absolutely the essence of *savoir faire*. I like to appear in any society entirely at my ease, conscious of my own importance, which in my estimation is unlimited—affable and very receptive. I like to appear slightly condescending, very much *du grand monde*, and to be the centre of interest. Yes, but *quelquefois* to my

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

unutterable chagrin, unmistakable shyness seizes me. Isn't it ludicrous? I become conscious of my hands, and slightly inclined to blush.

" 22nd October.

" I thank Heaven that at present, though I am damnable, I am in love with nobody except *myself*."

2

In November—the beginning of summer in New Zealand—Kathleen's father, in perplexity, arranged for her to go with a neighbour's party on a caravan trip through the Midlands of the North Island—the wild, uncultivated King Country, populated by scattered Maori *pahs* and a few farms, widely dispersed—the country afterward the setting of *Milly* and *The Woman at the Store*.

The journey—just a six weeks' trip in a caravan wagon through untamed New Zealand country—was important in the life of Kathleen Beauchamp for several reasons: not only did it give her new material for study—the Maoris in their native *pahs*, something more of their language, some deeper beauty at the roots of New Zealand beyond the frontiers forced by her pioneer Pa-men, and something, too, of the starkness of the tragedy which fills Porirua with insane—but when she returned from this journey, she was a different person. During those six weeks, she had journeyed within herself, as well.

The urge to write had taken complete possession of her. She kept an almost daily record of those weeks—filling one of the small black notebooks with shaky pencilled jottings as the wagon bumped

over the rough trail ; writing by candle in the tent while the others slept ; scribbling by the first light while they were still asleep. She always meant to use this material, probably for a novel of New Zealand ; undoubtedly it would have been written had she lived. But she did, indeed—in her series of stories for *Rhythm*—employ this background, this atmosphere of isolation—so stimulating for a few weeks, so disastrous to sanity after a few years.

They started by train from Wellington, north, by way of Kaitoke and Hastings, where she had arranged to collect her post :

" Sunday.

" Dear Mr. Miller,

" I have to thank you for keeping my none too small amount of correspondence. I went to the Bank yesterday afternoon foolishly forgetting that it was closing day. Will you kindly address any letters that may arrive for me c/o Bank of New Zealand—Hastings—I shall be there Saturday.

" This paper is vile, but I am once more on the ranch.

" Once more thanking you,

Sincerely yours,

" K. M. Beauchamp."

They continued, through Napier on Hawke Bay, to Petane, a few miles further up the coast. There the train journey ended, and the caravan started through the Petane Valley, east, through the King Country—the Kaingaroa Plain—to Rotorua.

KAINGAROA (URIWERA) PLAIN.

" November, 1907.

" On the journey, the sea was most beautiful, a silver point etching and a pale sun breaking through pearl clouds.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

"There is something inexpressibly charming to me in railway travelling. I lean out of the window, the breeze blows, buffeting and friendly against my face, and the child spirit, hidden away under a hundred and one grey city wrappings, bursts its bonds and exults within me. I watch the long succession of brown paddocks, beautiful, with here a thick spreading of buttercups, there a white sweetness of arum lilies, And there are valleys lit with the swaying light of broom blossom. In the distance, grey *whares*, two eyes and a mouth, with a bright petticoat frill of a garden creeping around them.

"On a white road once a procession of patient cattle wended their way, funeral wise—and behind them a boy rode on a brown horse. Something in the poise of his figure, in the strong sunburnt colour of his naked legs reminded me of Walt Whitman.

"Everywhere on the hills, great masses of charred logs, looking for all the world like strange, fantastic beasts: a yawning crocodile, a headless horse, a gigantic gosling, a watch dog—to be smiled at and scorned in the daylight—but a veritable nightmare in the darkness. And now and again the silver tree trunks, like a skeleton army, invade the hills.

"At Kaitoke the train stopped for "morning lunch," the inevitable tea of the New Zealander. The F.T. and I paced the platform, peered into the long wooden saloon where a great counter was piled with ham sandwiches and cups and saucers, soda cake, and great billys of milk. We didn't want to eat, and walked to the end of the platform, and looked into the valley. Below us lay a shivering mass of white native blossom—a little tree touched with scarlet—a clump of *toi-toi* waving in the wind, and looking for all the world like a family of little girls drying their hair.

"Late in the afternoon we stopped at Jakesville. How we play inside the house while Life sits on the front door step and Death mounts guard at the back.

"After brief snatches of terribly unrefreshing sleep, I woke, and found the grey dawn slipping into the tent.

I was hot and tired and full of discomfort—the frightful buzzing of mosquitos—the slow breathing of the others seemed to weigh upon my brain for a moment; and then I found that the air was alive with birds’ song. From far and near they called and cried to each other. I got up and slipped through the little tent opening on to the wet grass. All around me the willow still full of gloomy shades—the caravan in the glade a ghost of itself—but across the clouded grey sky, the vivid streak of rose colour blazoned on the day. The grass was full of clover bloom. I caught up my dressing gown with both hands and ran down to the river—and the water flowed on, musically laughing, and the green willows suddenly stirred by the breathings of the dawning day, swung softly together. Then I forgot the tent and was happy. . . .

“So we crept again through that frightful wire fence—which every time seemed to grow tighter and tighter, and walked along the white soft road. On one side the sky was filled with the sunset, vivid, clear yellow, and bronze green, and that incredible cloud shade of thick mauve.

“Round us in the darkness, the horses were moving softly, with a most eery sound. Visions of long dead Maoris, of forgotten battles and vanished feuds stirred in me, till I ran through the dark glade on to a bare hill. The track was very narrow and steep, and at the summit a little Maori *whare* was painted black against the wide sky. Before it two cabbage-trees stretched out phantom fingers, and a dog watching me coming up the hill barked madly. Then I saw the first star, very sweet and faint in the yellow sky, and then another and another, like little lilies—like primroses. And all around me in the gathering gloom the wood-hens called to each other with monotonous persistence—they seemed to be lost and suffering. I reached the *whare*, and a little Maori girl and three boys sprang from nowhere, and waved and beckoned. At the door a beautiful old Maori woman sat cuddling a cat. She wore a white handkerchief around her

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

white hair, and a vivid green-and-black check rug wrapped around her body. Under the rug I caught a glimpse of a very full blue-print dress, worn native fashion, the skirt over the bodice."

As the caravan lumbered on its first lap up through the Petane Valley, she wrote to Marie :

" PETANE VALLEY.

" Monday Morning (Dec. 18, 1907).

" *Bon jour*, Marie dearest—Your humble servant is seated on the very top of I know not how much luggage, so excuse the writing. This is the most extraordinary experience.

Our journey was charming. A great many Maoris on the train ; in fact I lunched next to a great brown fellow at Woodville. That was a memorable meal. We were both starving, with that dreadful, silent hunger. Picture to yourself a great barn of a place—full of finely papered chandeliers and long tables—decorated with paper flowers, and humanity most painfully in evidence. You could cut the atmosphere with a knife.

" Then the rain fell heavily, drearily into the river and the flax swamp and the mile upon mile of dull plain. In the distance, far and away in the distance, the mountains were hidden behind a thick grey veil."

The letters that she had written on the swaying caravan as they travelled through the manuka bush and sheep country, " very steep and bare, yet relieved here and there by the rivers and willows and little bush ravines "—she posted that evening at Pohue, a few miles up the Petane Valley. The day had been intensely hot ; they were dusty and tired when they reached Bodly's Accommodation House, where " his fourteen daughters grew peas."

That night they made camp "on the top of a hill

with mountains all around, and in the evening walked in the bush to a beautiful daisy-pied creek with fern and *tuis*.”

Fascinated by the Maoris in their native life, Kathleen watched them cook on their homestead, listened to “their hoarse crying,” looked at their roses. She had known old Armena at Anikiwa on the Marlborough Sounds, when she was a child, and there she had seen the deserted *pah* on the hill by the Maori’s burial ground which held Armena’s “seven husbands” ; she had known Maata and had found her more fascinating than any girl she had met—but Maata was a half-caste, brought up in English ways, and Armena had worked for the English, and had even married an Englishman. Here were Maoris in their native *pahs*—living much the life they must have lived when The True Original Pa Man pioneered in New Zealand in the ’50’s. It was all “meat” to her, as she used to say. For the time, she even forgot London.

The next morning they made an early start in summer rain. The roads grew rougher, less travelled. As they climbed Titi-o-Kiara, with the bush and the wild mountains all around, the day cleared. After their lunch which they had beyond the Maori *pah*, they found themselves out in the wild bush.

They camped that night at the Tarawera Mineral Baths. “We laughed with joy all day,” Kass wrote in the black Note Book.

The following day they reached the Waipunga Falls. How fierce the winds through the flax and manuka ! How bad the roads as they forced their way up hill through the shimmering heat to Rangi-

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

taiki. Kathleen's abiding memory of the Rangitaiki Valley was expressed in a poem of that name which she wrote a year or two later :

“ O valley of waving broom,
O lovely, lovely light,
O heart of the world, red-gold !
Breast high in the blossom I stand ;
It beat about me like waves
Of a magical, golden sea.

“ The barren heart of the world
Alive at the kiss of the sun,
The yellow mantle of Summer
Flung over a laughing land,
Warm with the warmth of her body,
Sweet with the kiss of her breath.

“ O valley of waving broom,
O lovely, lovely light,
O mystical marriage of Earth
With the passionate Summer sun !
To her lover she holds a cup
And the yellow wine o'erflows.
He has lighted a little torch
And the whole of the world is ablaze.
Prodigal wealth of love !
Breast high in the blossom I stand.”

At Rangitaiki Kathleen posted the letters she had been writing while they travelled. That evening they camped nearby, and they had cream at a clean farmhouse where the happiness of the man and woman and their daughter, isolated in the wilderness, was astonishing to Kass. She saw there, too, the wild pigs which had descended from those which Captain Cook had released in the '70's, and of which Cousin Ethel had told her years before at Anikiwa.

Two days later they struggled across the plain in a torrential downpour, over a fearful road, with “ long threading purple mountains ” in the distance. Wild horses swept by them ; they saw one clump of broom through the rain, and heard larks singing. After a time they reached *manuka* bush and saw more wild horses over the far plains. Their clothes were drenched, but they had no water to drink. It was a strange night in the tent, with “ quivering air ” and the solitude closing them in. The next few days Kass recorded fully in the black Note Book. She kept her impressions in flying words, with no attempt at form or style. It was a swift series of jottings to serve as background against which to weave future tales :

“ In the morning rain fast—the chuffing sound of the horses. We get up very early indeed, and at six o’clock ready to start ; the sun breaks through the grey clouds—There is a little dainty wind and a wide fissure of blue sky. Wet boots, wet motor veil, torn coat, and the dew shining on the scrub. No break-fast. We start—the road grows worse and worse. We seem to pass through nothing but scrub-covered valley, and then suddenly comes round the corner a piece of road. Great joy, but the horses rush right into it ; the traces are broken ; it grows more and more hopeless. The weather breaks and rain pours down. We lose the track again and again, become rather hopeless, when suddenly far ahead we see a man on a white horse. The men leave the cart and rush off. We met two men, Maoris in dirty blue ducks—one can hardly speak English. They are surveyors. We stop, boil the billy, and have tea and herrings. Oh ! how good—Ahead the purple mountains—the thin wretched dogs ; we talk to them. Then we drive the horses off, but there is no water ; the

dark people, our conversation—*Eta hoeremai te kai*—it is cold. The crackling fire of *manuka*, walking breast high through the *manuka*. . . . We approach Galatea. We lunch by the Galatea River ; there is an island in the centre, and a great clump of trees. The water is very green and swift. I see a wonderful great horse-fly ; the great heat of the sun, and then the clouds roll up.

“ ‘ Hold the horses or they’ll make a bolt for the river.’ My fright—Encounter one man, surveyor on white horse ; his conversation. At the city gates we pull up and walk into the city. There is a Store and Accommodation House, and a G.P.O. Mrs. Prodgers is here with the baby and the Englishman—It is a lovely river. The Maori women are rather special—the Post Boy—the children—an accident to the horses—very great. The Maori room, the cushions. Then a strange road in a sort of basin of strong underbush.

“ Through the red gate were waving fields and fresh flax—the homestead in the distance—a little field of sheep, willow and cabbage trees, and away in the distance the purple hills in the shadow—sheep in for the shearing.

“ Here we drive in and ask for a paddock. Past the shearing shed—past the homestead to a beautiful place with a little patch of bush—*tuis*, magpies, cattle and water running through. But I know from bitter experience that we shall be eaten by mosquitos. Two Maori girls are washing ; I go to talk with them ; they are so utterly kids. While the dinner cooks, I walk away and lean over a giant log. Before me a perfect panorama of sunset—long, sweet, steel-like cloud against the faint blue, the hills full of gloom, the little river with the tree beside it is burnished silver—The sheep, and a weird, passionate abandon of birds—the cries—the flocks—

“ Then the advent of Bella, her charm in the dusk, the very dusk incarnate. Her strange dress, her plaited hair, the shy, swaying figure. The life they lead there. In the shearing sheds—the yellow dress

"LA SEULE CHOSE"

with *tui* feathers on the coat and skirt and a () with scarlet () blossom. The () heat and look of the sheep. Farewell.

"Had strawberries."

"WAKI.

"Lunched in a space in the bush cut through and then by devious routs we came to the *pah*. It was adorable. Just the collection of huts, the built place for Koumara and potatoes. We visit first the house. The bright, clean, charming little place, roses and pinks in the garden. Through the doorway, the kettle and fire and bright tins—the woman—the child in the pink dress and red sleeves in all the (). How she stands gathering her pleats of dress—She can say just 'Yes.' Then we go into the parlour—photos—a charming clock—mats—kits—red table cloth—horsehair sofa. The child saying, 'Nicely, thank you.' The shy children, the Mother, and the poor baby, thin and naked. The other bright children—her splendid face and regal bearing.

"Then at the gate of the P.O. a great bright coloured crowd, almost threatening looking—a follower of Rua with long Fijian hair and side combs—a most beautiful girl of 15. She is married to a patriarch—her laughing face, her hands playing with the children's hair. Her smile across the broad river—the guide—the swimming dogs—it flows on—he stands in the water, a regal figure—then we alight, and we are out. The absolute ease of his figure, so boneless. He speeds our parting journey. His voice is so good. He speaks most correctly and enunciates each word. We see him last stopping to rest his horse.

"The sun is fearfully hot. We camp by the guide's whare. The splendor of the night."

"EARLY (MONDAY).

"The wet bushes brush against my face. . . .

"We pick Ngamoni (sweet potatoes) with the

Maori children—in the sunshine—Their talk and their queer, droll ways. . . . We learn, too, though it is difficult and tedious because our hands are so stiff. One girl is particularly interesting with auburn hair and black eyes. She laughs with an indescribable manner and has very white teeth. Then another Maori in a red and black striped flannel jacket. The small boy is raggedly dressed in brown—his clothes are torn in many places—he wears a brown felt hat with a *koe-koe* feather placed rakishly on one side.

“Here, too, I met Prodgers. It is splendid to see once again real English people. I am so tired and sick of the third-rate article. Give me the Maori *and* the tourist, but nothing between. All this place proved utterly disappointing after Nmuroa which was fascinating in the extreme. The Maoris were () some English and some Maori—not like the other natives. All these people dress in almost English clothes compared with the natives here. And they wear a great deal of ornament in Muroa and strange hair fashions. So we journey from their whare to Waiotapu. A grey day and I drive long dusty thick road and then before us is Tarawera,* with great white clefts—the poverty of the country—but the gorgeous blue mountains all around us in a great stretch of burnt *manuka*. We lunch and begin to decide whether to go to the Wharepuni. The men folk go, but eventually come back and say that the walk was too long—also the heat of the day—but there is a great *pah*, 1½ miles away. There we go. The first view—a man on the side of the road—in a white shirt and brown pants—waits for us. Opposite is a thick () Maori fence—in the distance across the paddock, *whares* clustered together like snails upon the green patch. And across the paddock a number of little boys come straggling along, from the age of twelve to three, out at elbow, bare-footed, indescribably dirty—but some of them almost beautiful—none of them

* The mountain of that name, near Rotorua.

very strong. There is one great fellow Feropa who speaks Eng. Black curls clustering round his broad brow, rest, almost langour in his black eyes—a slouching walk and yet there slumbers in his face passionate unrest and strength."

The next night they slept outside a *whare*. Kass found there a girl whom she knew—Walie, who brought them a great bowl of milk, a little cup of cream and some lard—great luxuries for travellers in that wild country. The girl stayed to dine with the caravan : Kass gave her a cigarette ; and Walie taught her Maori in return. Kathleen kept a list of Maori words and phrases during that trip. She had always known greeting phrases. (All New Zealanders know them.) And the Pa Man had many from his father, which he had taught the children. But on this journey, Kass acquired something of a vocabulary, learning the words in common use, the names of articles, and dress.

They stayed at the *whare* until the next midday. "There is something sad about it all," Kathleen felt, as they left. A week later, Thursday, they were at Rotorua. Letters were awaiting her there, and a telegram from her mother. She answered her mother the next day :

" Friday.

" Rotorua.

" Mother dearest

" Thank you for your wire which I received today and for Chaddie's (Marie's) lovely letter—So Vera has definitely left ; I can hardly realize it. What a strange household you must be feeling.

" You sound most gay at home. I am so glad.

" I wrote to Chaddie on Wednesday. Yesterday was very hot indeed. A party of us went a Round

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Trip to the Hamurana Spring—the Ottere Falls across Lake Rotoiti to Tikitere and then back here by coach. I confess frankly that I hate going trips with a party of tourists. They spoil half my pleasure—don't they yours—You know, one lady who is the wit of the day, and is 'flirty,' and the inevitable old man who becomes disgusted with everything, and the honey-moon couple. Rotorua is a happy hunting ground for these. We came back in the evening, grey with dust—hair and eyes and clothing—so I went and soaked in the Rachel bath. The tub is very large. It is a wise plan to always use the public one—and there one meets one sex very much 'in their nakedness'—Women are so apt to become communicative on these occasions that I carefully avoid them. I came home, *dined* and went into town with Mrs. (Ibbett). We ended with a Priest Bath—another pleasant thing—but most curious. At first we feel attacked by Dee-pa's friends—the humble (). The bath is of aerated water—very hot,¹ and you sit in the spring— But afterwards you" (and there she broke off, leaving the letter unfinished).

Rotorua was a fearful disappointment to Kathleen. It was not at all what she had expected. What did she anticipate in that city of geysers and mud baths? Whatever her preconceived notion of it (and her visual images always were powerful) she was disappointed at the outset. Always she was a barometer to elusive and usually unperceived differences; and something in the very atmosphere as she approached the place confounded her. The boiling mud baths seemed like great festering "sores upon the earth." The smell of sulphur, the heat of the steam "disgusted and outraged" her. It was "a little Hell—loathsome and ugly." Actually it made her so ill with sickening headaches that she had to sit by

herself in the town grounds while the others explored the dreadful "wonders of the world." Later she tried to bathe in the Priest and Rachel baths, but "felt fearfully low." She, herself, was no less surprised at the strange effect of it all upon her than were the others. In her Note Book she tried to analyse the conflicting inconsistencies of the beauty and the horror :

" ON THE JOURNEY TO WAIOTAPU.

" In the distance these hills ; to the right, almost violet ; to the left, grey with rain. Behind, a great mound of pewter colour and silver. Then as we journey, a little line of brilliant green trees and a mound of yellow grass. We stop at a little swamp to feed the horses, and there is only the sound of a frog.

" Intense stillness, almost terrible. Then the mountains are more pronounced. They are still more beautiful, and by and by a little puff of white steam . . . and by twists and turns in the road we pass several steam holes. Perfect stillness, and a strange red tinge on the cliffs.

" We pass one oily green lake—fantastic blossoming. The air is heavy with sulphur and steam. . . . By and by we go to see mud volcanos—mount the steps all slimy and green, and peer in. It bulges out of the hole in great blobs of loathsome colour like a terribly grisly sore upon the earth. In a little whirling pool below, a thin coating of petroleum—black with jet—Rain began to fall—She is disgusted and outraged.

" Coming back—the terrible road—the long, long distance—and finally soaking wetness and hunger. Bed and wetness again. The morning is fine but hot—The nearer they get to the town, the more she hates it. Perhaps it is the smell . . . "

" THURSDAY.

" The loathsome trip."

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

"FRIDAY.

"She is so tired that she sits in the town grounds all morning. That evening—horrid."

"SATURDAY.

"Letters. . . . The quiet afternoon—*fearful* rain—up to the ankles—the wet camp—the fear of having to move—She thinks Rotorua is loathsome and ugly—that little Hell."

"SUNDAY MORNING.

"The early start—It seems at each mile post her heart leaps. But as they leave it, the town is very beautiful and Whaha—full of white mist—strangely fanciful . . .

"Oh, it is too hot where they lunch. She feels so ill—so tired—her headache is most violent—she can barely open her eyes but must lean back, though the jolting of the cart pains her. . . .

"They meet a Maori again, walking along, powerful and strong. She shouted, '*Tenakoe* (good day !)' . . . "

"MONDAY.

"All Sunday the further she went from Rotorua, the happier she became. Towards evening they came to a great mountain—It was very rugged and old and grim, an ancient fighting *pah*. Here the Maoris had fought, and at the top of this *pah* a spring bubbled . . . Then rounding the corner, they saw the Wairakei River, turbulent, and wildly rushing below them . . .

"They camp in a paddock down by the river—a wonderful spot. . . . Before them a wide sheet of swift, smooth water—and a poplar tree, and a long straight line of pines. . . . Just there—on the bank ahead of them—a *manuka* tree in full blossom leans toward the water. The paddock is full of *manuka* . . .

"After dinner . . . they go through the gates—always there is a thundering sound from afar off—down the sandy path, and into a little pine cavern.

The floor is brown with needles—great boulders come in their path—The *manuka* has grown over the path—With heads bent, hands out, they battle through and then suddenly a clearing of burnt *manuka*—and they both cry aloud—There is the river—savage, fierce, rushing, tumbling—whirling suddenly the life from the still, placid floor of water behind—like waves of the sea—like fierce wolves—the noise is thunder—And right before them the lovely mountain outlined against a vivid orange sky—The colour is so intense that it is reflected on their faces—in their hair ; the very rock which they climb is hot with the colour. The sunset changes—becomes mauve—and in the waning light, all the stretch of burnt *manuka* is like a thin mauve mist around them. A bird—large and silent—flies from the river right into the flowering sky. There is no other sound except the voice of the passionate river.

“ She climbs on a great black rock and sits huddled up there alone—fiercely—almost brutally thinking—like Wapi. Behind them the sky was faintly heliotrope—and then suddenly from behind a cloud a little silver moon shone through—the sudden exquisite note in the night—The sky changes—glowed again—and the river sounded more thundering—more deafening. They walked back slowly—lost the way—and found it—took up a handful of pine needles and smelt it greedily ; and then in the distant paddock the tent shone like a golden poppy—Outside the stars and the utter spell—magic mist moving—mist over the whole world—Lying—her arm over her head—she can see faintly—like a grey thought—the moon and the mist. They are hardly distinguishable. She is not tired now—only happy. She can see the poplar tree mirrored in the water. The grass is wet. There is the faintest sound of crickets. As she touches her hair, a wave of cold air strikes her. Damp cold fingers about her heart.

“ The sun comes. The poplar is green, now. Oh, it shines on everything—a little grove of forest. Across

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

the river the mist becomes white, rises from the mountain ahead. There are the pines—and there just on the bank—the flowering bank—is a moat of white colour against the blue water. A lark sings—The water bubbles. She can just see ahead the gleam of the rapids—The mist seems rising and falling . . .

“Sunshine—had there ever been such sunshine—They walked over the wet road through the pine trees. The sun gleamed—golden locusts cornered in the bushes—Through her thin blouse she felt its scorching touch and was glad.”

As they turned south, on the home journey, she began two letters :

“Monday night.

“In Bed.

“Dearest Baby—

“This will, I think, be my last letter to you before I reach home—I wrote last to Chaddie from Rotorua—I must say I hated that town—I never felt so ill or depressed. It was H——.”

“Monday night.

“Dear Man

“I am a vagrant—a Wanderer—a Gypsy tonight—booming wind—it rises half a tone above each minute—but that is all—it never ceases . . . and where the water catches the light there is a rainbow—pink—blue—amber—white—But it is all too short—”

They were driving due south, on the road to Oraki-Korako, now. Mounting the hill, they looked down on “mile on mile of river winding in and out among the mountains” with toi-toi waving on the bank. On all sides the plain stretched, calm and still, “like a mirror for the sky.” But at a turn, the stillness was shattered :

“Then there came rapids. Great foaming, rushing torrents—They tore down the mountains, thundering,

roaring—We drew rein—and there was a wide space of blue forget-me-nots.”

Following the river, they found quiet again—with mist hanging low. Kathleen watched the water through the leaves and trees until the danger and uncertainty of that passage between the hanging cliffs wrenched her attention; yet at the top, once it was gained, she was released for a fiercer beauty :

“ There is the sea foaming torrents of water, leaping, snow-white, like lions fighting—thundering against the green land—and the land stretches out ineffectual arms to hold it back.—It seems there is nothing in the world but this shattering sound of water. It casts a thousand showers of silver spray—It is one gigantic battle. I watch it and am thrilled. Then through more bush—the ferns are almost too exquisite—gloomy shade—sequestered deeps—another rock—another view—here the colour is far more intense—the purple, the blue, the great green clad rock. The water thunders down, foams, rushes—then pours itself through a narrow passage and comes out on a wide blue bay. . . . A wide passage, more eddy. At last, far in the distance stretching shadowed steadiness—*Peace*. We plunge back again—there is a last view—very near—the water, the mountains far distant.”

They approached Orakei-Korako, around a bend of road and river, and she saw poplars, grouped like a study for an etching, with a mere suggestion of fence. Her quick eye followed the line, and the distant colours: “ a green patch of flowering potatoes—mauve, blue and white.” The place seemed deserted, yet from the bush they heard “ the death-like thudding—like a paddle wheel.”

Again she met the horror of smell and smoke, and the filthy festering sores upon the earth :

“ We go down the dragon’s Mouth. It is a most difficult walk down a scrambling path—holding on by bushes and trees—then there is one fierce jump—and we are there. It belches filthy steam and smoke. There is green slime and yellow scale-like appearances, infinitely impressive, and always that ominous thudding engine-like sound. We walk on a broad, flat terrace, and there is so thin a crust that one would have thought it almost too dangerous to move. We see a very small geyser and view the sulphur holes.”

In the terrible heat, and the thudding noise, Kathleen groped her way dizzily back to the known world from this new Hell, hated only second to Rotorua.

Later that day they drove through Wairakei, a few miles above Taupo, which is situated on the northern arm of the great lake. After the hot day, the Taupo Falls were a grateful relief: “ The water is sea-coloured ; the foam dips for a long way down the water. Again that sound.” They passed more poplars—this time less impressive—as they drove through the bush to the bridge and “ stood there a moment—quiet—All the thundering wonder was below us ! ”

“ In the afternoon we climbed down the bank—first a ladder, then rough steps—another ladder—catching swaying—and a fern grotto—pale green—green fern leaf from the top all around us—dampness and beauty—and we are below the falls—the mountain of water—the sound—the essence of it.”

All this wild beauty, so known and loved by the Maoris, so little spoiled, then, by white settlers, had

its effect upon her. The sound and rhythm of the Maori names were to her like sound and rhythm of flowing water :

“ Wairaki—hot water.
Waotapi—sacred water.”

She wrote them in her Note Book, with a list of Maori words, and their meanings. London was distant to her now. London was the dream state. Here was reality. For a time she was living and moving and having her being in the immediate moment. Gone that shattering division. Her roots were nourished again by their own soil ; and for the time (so brief) she was at peace within herself, fed by the beauty and colour and strange magic—compañioned, in a curious way, by the knowledge that natives who had known all this through so many centuries, had drawn from it essential life.

Despite the arduous journey of that day, she tried one of her *Vignettes* :

“ *Vignette.*

“ TUESDAY.

“ I stand in the *manuka* scrub—the fairy blossom.

“ Everywhere the broom tosses its golden fragrant plumes into the air. I am on a little rise : to my right, a great tree of *Mimosa* laden with blossom bends and foams in the breeze. Before me the lake is drowned in the sunset. The distant mountains are silver blue, and the sky first faint rose, then shaded into pale amber.

“ Far away on my left the land is heavily shadowed and sharply outlined—fold upon fold of grey cloud. . . .

“ A white moth flutters past me. I hear always the whisper of the water.

“ I am alone. I am hidden. Life seems to have

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

passed away—drifted and drifted miles and worlds on beyond the fairy sight.

“Very faint and clear the bird calls and cries—and another on a little scarlet tree close by me answers with an ecstasy of song.

“Then I hear steps approaching. A young Maori girl climbs slowly up the hill. She does not see me. I do not move. She reaches a little knoll and suddenly sits down, native fashion, her legs crossed, her hands clasped in her lap. She is dressed in a blue skirt and a soft white blouse. Round her neck is a piece of twisted flax, and a long piece of greenstone is suspended from it. Her black hair is twisted softly at her neck. She wears long white and red earrings. . . . She sits silently—utterly motionless—her head thrown back. All the lines of her face are passionate, violent, savage, but in her eyes slumbers a tragic, illimitable Peace.

“The sky changes—softens. The world is all grey mist—the land in heavy shadow—silence in the woods.

“The girl does not move—But very faint, sweet and beautiful—a star wakes in the sky. She is the very incarnation of evening.”

Over the hills they came to Taupo : “in the foreground blue, then purple, then silver—on this side the pines—the gum trees—the clustering houses—and a fringe of yellow meadow.” The little green Island, Motu Taiko, seemed to be floating in the lake, “with at last the mountain, the majestic God of it all towering against the sky.” They passed the little promontory of green flat, and the tracks of broom, approaching Tapu across a white bridge swinging over a river—“peacock-blue.” They followed the white road, past the Maoris “lounging in the sun.” There Kathleen watched a moment of drama—an old Maori

woman and a little child crowded together, waiting—for what? The scene lasted a moment only, but to her it seemed a whole cross-section of life.

"Other Maoris come to help the old woman into a cart—a white, bony horse, very lamed. The child cries and cries. The old man sways to and fro. She holds on to him with a most pathetic gesture. They drive into the night."

The caravan followed the road winding by the Lake and through great avenues of pines to the Hotel. "Here are lawns and cut trees . . . bolder walks—stray paths—all the red brown pine needle carpet. The house is not pretty, but poppies grow round it."

She was in a receptive state now. All of the outer layers, hardened by conflict, by friction, were peeled away, leaving the mind so sensitive to beauty, reflecting from innumerable facets any loveliness to which it might be exposed :

"All is harmonious and peaceful and delicious. We camp in a pine forest—beautiful. There are chickens cheeping ; the people are so utterly benevolent. We are like children here with happiness. We drive through the sunset—then supper at the hotel. And the night is utterly perfect. We go to the mineral baths. The walk there down the hill is divine. The suggestion of water and cypresses ; it is very steep. Not a fire bath, though very hot—so pleasant. Then we go home—tired—hot—happy—blissfully happy. We sleep in the tent . . . wake early and wash and dress and go down to the hotel again. The birds are magical. I feel I cannot leave, but pluck honeysuckle. The splashes of light lie in the pine woods."

All her life she had heard of the Waihi massacre,

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

of the True Original Pa Man's pioneering era—now she walked over that very ground :

“ Then—goodbye, Taupo, and we are on the plains. I feel quite at home again. At last we come to Waihi the scene of a more horrible massacre—only two men were saved : one rushed through the bush ; one was cutting wood. We stop to look for water, and there are two men—one Oscar ; one most perfect Maori—like iron.

“ Then we are in a valley of colour—it is strewn everywhere. I have never dreamed of so much blossom.”

When they lunched, it was to discover again what they had found throughout the journey—that the natives accepted them with that inherent Maori kindness and courtesy that made the blending of the two races so desirable. Kathleen jotted in her notes : “ They do not seem so much surprised to see us. Give us fresh bread.”

December 14th was their last morning : “ Oh, what a storm last night ! ” she wrote, “ and the coming of the dawn with the willows lashing together.” In her final notes she already was projecting her mind toward the city—back again to her ambitions, to that ardent striving to “ live ” quickly. On December 15th, she wrote—not a description—but a poem, *Youth* ; and her programme for the days ahead :

“ 6-8 technique
9-1 practise
2-5 write.”

They left the caravan and were precipitated into the civilisation of Wellington—another world,

306

another epoch, almost all the distance between the days of the True Original Pa Man pioneer, and the days of Kathleen Beauchamp, lately from London.

Her final entry was indicative of the swift leap in time and place—the return to self-consciousness :

" IN THE TRAIN—Dec. 17th.

" Has there ever been a hotter day? The land parches—golden with the heat. The sheep are sheltering in the shadow of the (woods). In the distance the hills are shimmering in the heat. M. and I. sitting opposite each other. I look *perfectly charming*."

3

What was the importance of those six weeks in the wild King Country? It drew her back (that was perhaps paramount) to New Zealand in a way closer than she had ever known. There had been Anikiwa and Picton on the Sounds, when she was a child. There had been Karori, too—the Pa Man's New Zealand—the Island of the '90's. But at Lake Taupo she found something which rooted her even more deeply and permanently in the wild and beautiful primitive country and its people.

She was older now ; she could know its more poignant significance. She never forgot those things ; she spoke of them often ; all her life she kept the small black Note Book with the jottings of that trip—meaning, in her own way, and in her own time, to make it live again later, as she did, indeed, in the two early stories.

This was its enduring meaning ; but the

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

immediate effect was to make her even more restless in Wellington, even more at odds with her immediate surroundings ; they had neither the lure of the wild, nor the attraction of the cultivated. January 1st she greeted :

“ The year be darned—MY YEAR

1908

And a happy New Year to you and the sky, the great star, the light. . . .

Well—I have the brain and also the inventive faculty.

What else is needed ? ”

February and March were bitter and painful months. Wellington seemed more insufferable by contrast to the wild, free Midlands. Again she lived a dual existence—living, as it were by force of will, in London, gathering all her forces in desperation against the physical barriers that held her from it.

“ I always seem to learn at the risk of my life ” (she said later)—“ but I do learn.” She knew, without doubt, that only by behaving so outrageously that her father would be glad to be rid of her, could she free herself. Yet the price of such behaviour was terrible to her. She was no “ widely experienced woman of thirty.” She was a girl of eighteen, reared in an isolated mid-Victorian community for fourteen years ; sheltered in Miss Clara Fenessa Wood’s circumspect London boarding-house for three more ; taught “ life ” suddenly and violently by unassimilated, ill-assorted reading.

Her entries for the next three months were only curt “ evidence ” :

" Feb. 10th.

" I shall end—of course—by killing myself."

" March 18th.

" I purchase my freedom with my life—It were better that I were dead—really—I am unlike others because I have experienced all there is to experience. But there is no one to help me—Of course Oscar—Dorian Gray has brought the S.S. to pass."

" May 1st.

" I am now much worse than ever. Madness must lie this way. *Pull yourself up.*"

There lay one secret of her rapid and extraordinary growth : that remarkable rallying power—that source of strength which (after vainly looking everywhere) she found within herself.

Always it had been true—and always it would be—there was " no one to help " her. Like that other Katya, to whom she felt herself so similar, " her soul had never known, and never would know shelter all her life, all her life."

Now she was searching deeply for the answer—and for the strength to measure it—as always she forced herself to seek the answer and the means :

" 9 p.m. SUNDAY NIGHT. MAY 17th. FULL MOON.

" Now to plan it.

" O, Kathleen, do not weave any more of these fearful meshes—for you have been so loathsomely unwise. Do take wisdom from all that you have and must still suffer. I really know that you *can't* stay as you are now. Be good—for the love of God—be good—and brave, and do tell the truth more and live a better life—I am tired of all this deceit—and the moon still shines—and the stars are still there— You'd better go and see the doctor tomorrow about your heart—and then try to solve all the silly drivelling problems.

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Go anywhere. Don't stay here—accept work—fight against people. As it is, with a rapidity unimaginable, you are going to the Devil—PULL UP NOW YOURSELF. It is really most extraordinary that I should feel so confident of dying of heart failure—and entirely my Mother's fault."

Rapidly she was freeing herself from "the self-forged chains." She was coming to doubt what had been gospel to her for three years ; and in her very doubting, she was finding her release :

"MAY 1908.

"I have just finished reading a book by Elizabeth Robins *Come and Find me*. Really a clever, splendid book ; it creates in me such a sense of power. I feel that I do not realise what women in the future will be capable of achieving—They truly, as yet, have never had their chance. Talk of our enlightened days and our emancipated country—pure nonsense. We are firmly held in self-fashioned chains of slavery yet. Now I see that they *are* self-fashioned and must be self-removed. *Eh bien!* Now where is my ideal and idea of life ? Does Oscar—and there is a gardenia yet alive beside my bed—Does Oscar still keep so firm a stronghold in my soul ? No ! Because now I am growing capable of seeing a wider vision—a little Oscar—a little Symons—a little Ibsen—Tolstoy—Elizabeth Robins—Shaw—D'Annunzio—Meredith. To weave the intricate tapestry of one's own life—it is well to take a thread from many harmonious skeins and realise there must be harmony. Not necessary to grow the sheep, comb the wool, colour and braid it—But joyfully take all that is ready—and with that saved time go a great way further.

"Independence, resolve, firm purpose and the gift of discrimination makes *mental clearness*. Here are the inevitables. Again—Will—the realisation that Art is absolutely self-development—The knowledge that

“LA SEULE CHOSE”

genius is dormant in every soul—that that very individuality which is at the root of our being—is what matters so poignantly.”

The struggle with her family was very bitter to her. She carried the scars of it in her soul for many years to come ; and though, afterwards, she judged her past self with an extreme severity, she stood fast by the conviction that, essentially, there had been no other way to freedom for her but to be cast out. What this meant to her in sheer pain, only the one or two who knew her intimately can imagine : for henceforward her delicate, sensitive, child-like spirit was hidden, now permanently, behind an armour. To those who met her she was quiet and aloof, or gay and mocking and reckless, or bewilderingly both at once ; yet at the touch of true sympathy and affection the barriers were down, the gates of her heart flung wide. Too suddenly, sometimes, and too wide. This was, henceforward, her danger. Her longing to trust and to give was almost an anguish ; and when her gift was given into blundering or even callous hands, when, as she afterwards put it, “she let the wrong people into her holy of holies,” the recoil was terrible. Again and again she was torn to pieces, shattered by disillusion. Then she gathered her amazing courage again.

That courage speaks, perhaps for the first time, with its own authentic accent—“my heart is *hurting* me with FEAR”—in her words to herself before the final struggle with her father. The pulse of her physical heart, at such moments, she afterwards said was so rapid that it seemed to flutter and cease. The strain was so great that she was

secretly convinced all her life that she would die of heart-failure. She never believed that she would die of tuberculosis. That was not in her destiny. The manner of her death was quite certain to her. The heart that hurt her so often with fear would give the final stab.

"I am frightened and trying to be brave. This is the greatest and most terrible torture that I have ever thought of enduring. I can have courage, face him bravely with my head high and *fight* for Life. Here at last I am standing terribly, absolutely alone. What can happen—help—support—What can I do—and what can happen—Shall it be Heaven or shall it be Hell—I must win, but I first must face the guns, resolutely. It is no good shrinking behind these hedges and great stones—remaining in the shadow. In the full glare I must go to Death or Life. Now is the time to prove myself, now is the fulfilment of all my philosophy and my knowledge. Think only what it means—for a moment think of all that, and then do not mind if the enemy fire and fire again. You have the magic suit of mail. Belief in the outcome clothes you ; but be firm and rational and calm. And at last learn that you must go forth into the great battle with a strong heart. I cannot longer stay in the shadow though my heart is *hurting* me with FEAR. Here is the supreme crisis, here is the ninth wave. If it goes over my head, I must rise and shake the water out of my eyes and hair and plunge in, Oh, victory must be mine. With both hands I embrace the thought. Hold, hold, stand firm, and let the music crash and deafen. It cannot hide the beating of my heart.

"O Kathleen, I pity you, but I see that it has to come, this great wrench. In your life you are always a coward until the very last moment, but here is the greatest thing in your life. Prove yourself strong—Dearest, I hold your two hands, and my eyes look full

“LA SEULE CHOSE”

into yours, trustingly, firmly, resolutely, full of supreme calm, hope and illimitable belief. You must be a woman now and bear the agony of creating. Prove yourself. Be strong, be kind, be wise, and it is yours. Do not at the last moment lose courage. Argue wisely and quietly. Be more than woman. Keep your brain perfectly clear, keep your balance !!!

“Convince your father that it is *la seule chose*. Think of the Heaven that might be yours, that is before you after this fight. They stand and wait for you with outstretched hands, and with a glad cry you fall into their arms. The future years—Good luck my precious one. I love you.”

What she was afterwards to call “the old trick of looking in the glass and saying, ‘Courage, Katherine!’”—the trick she needed so often in her life—“won after all.”

“I’ve *acted* my sins, and then excused them, or put them away with ‘it doesn’t do to think about these things,’ or (more often) ‘it was all experience.’ But it hasn’t ALL been experience. There is waste—destruction, too.”—*Letters*.

KATHERINE MANSFIELD left New Zealand on July 9th, 1908. She never returned, though the time came when she longed to return—a time when her resentment against it was turned away, and with a glad and humble heart she acknowledged it to be her own country—the Island to which she belonged. But that time was not yet. Seven years had to pass ; and of those seven years the first three were so bitter in her memory that she seldom spoke of them. There were moments, flying moments, which she remembered with delight ; but they seem to have been moments only.

On July 3rd, 1908, she sailed from Wellington on the S.S. *Moeri* to Lyttleton in the South Island. From Lyttleton she embarked on the S.S. *Tapanui*, bound, by way of Montevideo and Teneriffe, for Plymouth.

True to his character, her father was generously concerned for her at the last. He and her mother went with her to Lyttleton to see her off. He had cabled to relatives in London, asking them to take

her ; but they had refused. So he had found for her in London a kind of hostel for unmarried business women. By a queer coincidence of the same sort which decided that she should look out, from her first rooms in Queen's College, upon Mansfield Mews, the name of the hostel was Beauchamp Lodge. Further, she was to receive an allowance of £100 a year, paid monthly, through the London manager of the Bank of New Zealand, who was to keep a friendly eye upon her. Friendly, indeed, it proved to be ; but perhaps not altogether of the disciplinary benevolence imagined by her father. The manager found it impossible to maintain the semblance of austerity required in face of Katherine's critical gaze. He took the safer course, and made her his confidant and adviser in his affairs of the heart. In return, he became a loyal defender of hers. Of his bones were coral made. Some elements of him went to the picture of the Boss in *The Fly*.

Katherine's memories of Beauchamp Lodge were always depressing. Her husband seems to remember that she pointed it out to him one day from the top of a 'bus, and that it was a tall grey building, standing up sheer from the railway, behind Paddington Station, perhaps somewhere near the beginning of the Harrow Road.

She lost no time in renewing her relations with the Trowell family, who were now settled in Carlton Hill, St. John's Wood ; and she stayed in their house for some time. She conceived an affection for St. John's Wood which endured ; and in 1915, when she first chose a house to live in herself, it was

in St. John's Wood that she found it. Six years later still she wrote to a friend :

"What a pity it is you can't get a house in St. John's Wood. I think it is the *one* darling part of London. . . . It has a charm. But perhaps that is because I lived there in Carlton Hill for a long time when I was young and very very happy. I used to walk about there at night—late—walking and talking on nights in Spring with two brothers. Our house had a real garden, too, with trees and all the rooms were good—the top rooms lovely. But it's all the musical people who make St. John's Wood so delightful. Those grunting 'cellos, those flying fiddles and the wonderful pianos. It's like a certain part of Brussels."

It was in the drawing-room at Carlton Hill, as Katherine remembered long afterwards in her *Journal*, that she played cribbage so often "with such intense—Heavens with what!—feelings while T. played the piano."

T. was Tommy Trowell—Arnold's baptismal name—the other brother was Garnet, and the happy spring she remembered was, apparently, the spring of 1909. But perhaps her memory was charitable. Certainly, in the early spring of that year she was very miserable ; and in her misery did a rash and impulsive thing in the effort to escape from it.

Nor, apparently, was her stay at Carlton Hill so long as she afterwards imagined. She was back at Beauchamp Lodge by the end of February ; and somewhere about that time, being in straits for money, she sold her 'cello for two pounds. Katherine

being what she was, it is difficult not to believe that this was not expressive of a farewell to music. With the sale of her 'cello, she gave up her musical ambitions. They had been curiously personal, as we have seen. Music, a family of musicians, and one young musician with a touch of genius, had been the only path leading from the world of New Zealand to the world of art. Since it had been the only path, she had to tread it. And there is little doubt that her romantic passion for Arnold Trowell was rather a necessary part of the artistic destiny she dreamed for herself than an expression of her essential nature. A simple affection, a sincere comradeship, had been idealised through separation (at Queen's and in New Zealand) into something more glorious which could not stand the test of proximity.

Indeed, what genuine love-passion was at the heart of this dream appears to have been transferred to Arnold's brother, Garnet. This was, at least, a flesh and blood affair ; but it also seems to have derived less from love than from the desire to be in love. At this moment, Musset's dictum was true of Katherine. *Elle se passionnait pour la passion.* She was eager for essential experience, and even eager to pay the price for it. Probably she could have given to herself no account of the hunger which possessed her and drove her on. It was, indeed, elemental : an instinctive need to prove life "upon her pulses." The creed of conscious experiment, which she believed she had imbibed from *Dorian Gray*, was not really for her at all. That demanded a deliberate and advised withholding of some part of herself, which was not in her nature. Surrender

herself she must. There never could be, and never was, any holding back.

She seemed even to grasp at the opportunity of suffering. The fragments of her journal at this time are fevered and shrill ; but the pain is there.

“ It is the evening of Good Friday ; the day of all the year, surely, the most significant. I always, always feel the nail-prints in my hands . . . the agony of Jesus. He is surely not dead, and surely all we love who have died are *close* to us. Grandmother and Jesus and all of them—only lend me your aid—I *thirst* too—I hang upon the cross. Let me be crucified—so that I may cry ‘ It is finished.’ ”

Her inward turmoil was extreme. She found that the experience for which she hungered was shattering. It did not, as she believed it would, issue in self-expression. She was discovering that she could not have life on terms of her own, even when those terms were by no means prudential. Dimly, at the back of her mind, was the purpose of sacrificing herself to life to enrich her art. She would have the experience to express. But Life cannot be managed in that way. You cannot say “ Thus far, and no farther ” to suffering when you have once exposed yourself to it. It becomes the master, and declares that its will, not yours, shall be done. The fine point of detached awareness, from which in imagination the artist should serenely contemplate his own experience, is itself engulfed in the experience. What should be art is merely the cry of animal pain.

The deception was bitter ; and suddenly Katherine revolted against it. She would not any longer endure the sordidness of the suffering to no end. She would

become calm and cool and calculating. She would marry somebody who would respect her right to be an artist, who would stand between her and life, and secure to her the calm which she now believed to be necessary for creation. After all, that was what other women seemed to her to have done, or had had done for them ; was not such a calm established—she did not guess with what toil and long-suffering—around a famous woman-poet with whom, and with whose family, she now came slightly into contact ? And she came into contact with it by means of a man she had met in the musical circles of St. John's Wood. He was eminently fitted to be the link between the genuine Bohemianism of the professionals of Carlton Hill and the decorous combination of art and complete respectability which had been achieved in the famous family to which he introduced her. He was, indeed, a professional musician ; a singer and a teacher of singing—but he had advanced into the profession by the flowery path of a choral scholarship at Cambridge. He had education and refinement ; he was the gentleman-artist with the bedside manner, of the type afterwards depicted with subtle understanding in *Mr. Reginald Peacock's Day*. And he was, indubitably, like Mr. Peacock, an idealist, and, in particular, as it was almost an article of faith in the famous family, an idealist about women.

He had, no doubt, a genuine respect for Katherine's talent ; and perhaps he may have dreamed that he, with her, might found another such illustrious family, with another such centre of art and adoration in its midst. At any rate he

offered Katherine homage—he spoke lavishly of “laying himself at the feet of her genius”—and apparent security. In her weariness and disillusion, her desire to escape the exhaustions of Beauchamp Lodge, she suddenly accepted the offer, and married him in the spring of 1909. She was dressed all in black, with Ida Baker for her only attendant. Within a few days she had left him. Idealism about women at close quarters was not at all the refuge she had allowed herself to dream. She tried in vain to return to Beauchamp Lodge—for which her marriage now disqualified her—and this may be the moment when she went on tour as a super in a travelling opera company. She used to tell of cooking kippers over a fish-tail gas-flame in her bedroom; and she sometimes sang, with all the absurd gestures required of an opera chorus, snatches of her former parts.

Contadine !
Signorita !

The recollections, as she told them, were sometimes gay enough : but the whole period was one of great misery.

There are some sentences in an unfinished story, belonging to this time, which express her sense of total disillusion. The story is called *The New Zealander*, and it begins in the form of a letter, written from New Zealand to a friend in London :

“ I wonder where you are and what doing. London, England seems to me almost another planet. I cannot believe that only a few months ago we talked in your cool room and outside saw the leaves spring in the chestnut-tree on the corner. There life seems dead

SEA-CHANGE

for me—buried. Surely after my terrible sorrow, London seems to lose all her reality. I had thought of her as a gigantic mother in whose womb were bred all the great ones of the earth—and then—suddenly—she was barren, sterile . . . with the travail gone. I could not have stayed there any longer. I felt rather like a frightened child lost in a funeral procession—yes, as bad as that—and came home.”

Thus in imagination ; but in fact there was no home for her to go to. Home for her was not a place but a feeling—of security, and protection and understanding : of “belonging.” Her grandmother was dead ; and she was ill. “I am physically sick,” she wrote in her journal, “with no home, no place in which I can hang up my hat—to say Here I belong—for there is no such place in the wide world for me.” She had become the frightened child, vainly dreaming of a lap to rest in. “I can’t rest,” she cried, “that is the agonizing part.”

Meanwhile the news of her marriage and her separation—Katherine had cabled the former—had reached her mother and father. Naturally, they were filled with misgiving and alarm. Her mother’s sense of responsibility for her irresponsible daughter was acute ; and she hastened to England. Of what occurred between them at their meeting there is no record save of her mother’s greeting. Katherine had on a cheap shiny black hat. “Why child ! what are you wearing. You look like an old woman in that. As if you were going to a funeral !” But this was emphatically not a time when her mother loved her ; and no doubt the familiar little frown between her mother’s brows deepened. Long afterwards Katherine said that her mother could be cold

as steel. Katherine expected nothing less ; but she had dreams of something more.

She was told to return to her husband ; and she refused. She had good reason for refusing ; she was with child, and not by her husband. And she was not ashamed, not contrite. Her rebellion had taken life, and she would defend it.

There was nothing for it, then, but Katherine must go abroad and hide. The tender sympathy of the old Professor in Katherine's favourite *A Tedious Story* was not to be expected. The one thing needful in this case was that the breath of scandal should not be wafted overseas. So Katherine was despatched to Germany, first to a convent in the mountains, and then settled in the Bavarian village of Woerishofen. There she lodged with the post-mistress, who was kind to her, and ate at a pension. But soon she became seriously ill. She had been walking exultantly, barefoot, in the wild woods, and she was badly chilled. She lay shivering in bed, and wrote :

" I think it is the pain that makes me shiver and feel dizzy. To be alone all day, in a house whose every sound seems foreign to you, and to feel a terrible confusion in your body which affects you mentally, suddenly pictures for you detestable incidents, revolting personalities, which you only shake off to find recurring as the pain grows worse again. . . .

" The only adorable thing I can imagine is for my Grandmother to put me to bed and bring me a bowl of hot bread and milk, and, standing with her hands folded, the left thumb over the right, say in her adorable voice : ' There, darling, isn't that nice ? ' Oh, what a miracle of happiness that would be. To wake

SEA-CHANGE

later to find her turning down the bedclothes to see if my feet were cold, and wrapping them up in a little pink singlet, softer than cat's fur. . . . Alas ! ”

The physical pain she suffered at this time was intense, and she had a hard struggle to resist a too frequent recourse to veronal. But the pain was intermittent, and there were days when she was almost happy, thinking eagerly of her baby boy. But Katherine's child was fated to remain always a dream-child. It was born prematurely, and born dead : and her own life was in jeopardy. To the physical pain was added the greater mental agony of her loss. She had believed that a child was coming to put an end to her loneliness. The disappointment of her hope was unbearable. When she began to recover physical strength she implored Ida to find her a little child to take care of.

A tiny boy from a slum who needed a long holiday was found and brought to her. His name was Walter. He suffered, like so many slum-children, from the effects of malnutrition since birth. He had spindly legs and a distended stomach ; he had no appetite at all for simple wholesome food, and pined for the rubbish to which he was accustomed. Yet he was gentle, sensitive, quick and loving—a strange little creature from a dark other world, who blinked bewildered in this. He went to Katherine's heart, as she struggled to make him strong ; and the memory of that little boy was one day to emerge to stir the slow heart of the world. He was to be transmuted into Ma Parker's Lennie.

“ ‘ Gran, gi' us a penny ! ’ he coaxed.

“ ‘ Be off with you ; Gran ain't got no pennies. ’

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

“ ‘ Yes, you ’ave.’

“ ‘ No, I ain’t.’

“ ‘ Yes, you ’ave. Gi’ us one !’

“ Already she was feeling for the old, squashed, black leather purse.

“ ‘ Well, what’ll you give your gran ?’

“ He gave a shy little laugh and pressed closer. She felt his eyelid quivering against her cheek. ‘ I ain’t got nothing,’ he murmured. . . . ”

The spring came and Katherine was stronger. She began to reach out her tendrils to life again. One vivid little picture, of a dozen words, shines out from this time in her writing. Twelve years later she was looking down on the quietness of the Rhone Valley from Montana.

“ And yet I love this quiet clouded day. A bell sounds from afar ; the birds sing after one another as if they called across the tree-tops. I love this settled stillness, and this feeling that, at any moment, down may come the rain. Where the sky is not grey, it is silvery white, streaked with white clouds.”

At the very moment of that perception, in harmony with it, came the memory of the Bavarian village.

“ Strange ! I suddenly found myself outside the library in Woerishofen : spring—lilac—rain—books in black bindings.”

There was a library in Woerishofen. It was in fact a modest little spa with a discreet unfashionable fame for the water-cure of the good Pfarrer Kneipp. Katherine, like many others, came to believe in his instinctive health-wisdom, his curative sagacity ; and she admired him for his brusque and sterling

honesty and above all for the spirit with which the country parson regarded his gift of healing as a talent to be employed in the service not of himself, but of his Master. She gladly submitted to his ice-cold hosings, of which even the memory made one's teeth chatter, and gained strength thereby.

Since it was cheap and unfashionable, beautiful and homely, Woerishofen attracted impecunious continental *littérateurs*. Among them was a Polish literary critic, charming, distinguished and completely untrustworthy. He might have served as the original of one of Dostoevsky's Poles. He had a magnificent singing voice, and a wonderful repertory of Polish and Russian songs. He had, also, a passion for Stanislas Wyspianski, which he strove to communicate to her; and with his help and a German text she began to translate one of Wyspianski's plays. There was also a long, lugubrious German Pole who seems, in memory, to have sat at a *café* table all day long, plunged in a comic melancholy, humming over and again one single verse of a then popular song :

“ Du bist verrückt, mein kind,—
Du muss nach Berlin ;
Wo die verrückten sind—
Da gehörst du hin ! ”

There was yet another Pole, Yelski by name, who made a deeper impression. He was an odd little man, with a big head, and a passionate affection for his little boy, who was a musical *wunderkind*. Both the boy and the father were long cherished in Katherine's memory.

At any rate, in Woerishofen Katherine entered

more definitely than before into a genuine comradeship of letters. She met there a few people who lived, precariously but independently, by literature ; and she felt something of that intoxication which usually comes to the young English writer when he first meets continental co-evals and confrères. It is due partly to the sense that he is welcomed as a member of an international brotherhood ; partly to the sense that the lesser political freedom abroad is compensated by a greater intellectual freedom. To start a newspaper, to found a substantial magazine is not—and was not in 1909—the arduous commercial undertaking it is in England. There is a feeling of infinite possibilities. And when Katherine's new acquaintances talked to her, as they did, of translating her stories for the journals with which they were already connected, or which they proposed (as a matter of course) to found, her literary ardour was kindled anew.

She had begun to write the sketches which ultimately became her first book, *In a German Pension*. The first she wrote was *The Child who was Tired*. It is remote from the quality of her later work ; but it is deeply interesting. Superficially, it is a realistic story of peasant life ; but in essence it is nothing of the kind. *The Child who was Tired* is indubitably herself in the summer of 1909—the Katherine wearied with pain and crying in vain for rest—"the frightened child lost in a funeral procession." The peasant household is not any peasant household that Katherine experienced—actually the Bavarian peasants were kind to her, and she liked them—but merely a symbol of her experience of life. "My

experience of life," she wrote years afterwards, "is that it is pretty terrible." *The Child who was Tired* is her first effort to translate that experience into the forms of art—to utter "her cry against corruption."

It was not to be wondered at that even those who saw the promise of the story should have mistaken its intention and missed its deeper meaning. Very possibly Katherine herself was not fully conscious of this ; nor perhaps was she at first wholly averse to being received as a cynical realist. It was part of her plan for protective armour that she should achieve a reputation as one who, having seen through everything, was incapable of further disillusionment.

Probably Mr. Orage, the editor of *The New Age*, who accepted her story and immediately encouraged her to write more, was not wholly deceived by her pose as the complete woman of the world. After all, she was barely twenty-one when *The Child who was Tired* was published in *The New Age*, and followed fairly rapidly with the remaining sketches which comprise *In a German Pension*. None the less, he seems to have decided that Katherine's real bent was cynical and satirical, and to have used his influence—which was naturally considerable—to keep her in that straight and narrow path.

The slightly mistaken conception of Katherine's genius was probably inevitable. But the time was to come when its limitations were felt by her as constraints which she must not accept ; and there ensued a lamentable severance of her relations with

the one journal and the one editor of standing who had given a real welcome to her work.

The Child who was Tired appeared in *The New Age* of February 24th, 1910. At about this time she returned to England.

Katherine was in England in February, 1910, and had apparently returned for the time being to her then husband : for Mr. Orage remembers that she brought the manuscript of *The Child who was Tired* to the office of *The New Age* in person, and that her husband was waiting outside for her and the editor's decision. She came out radiant. Mr. Orage had not only accepted her story, he had offered to publish it in the very next issue, and he had asked her for more. This generous recognition was never forgotten. To the end of her life, when Mr. Orage once more played a part in it, Katherine thought of him with affection and admiration ; and certainly the friendship which now developed between her and him and Beatrice Hastings was the one period of her life between 1908 and 1911 upon which she constantly looked back with delight. She stayed with them frequently in a cottage in Sussex, and had the joy of being among her own kind.

But in the full spring she was seriously ill once more. Writing to Sylvia Lynd in 1920, she remembered it.

"You're better now? It's a cursed thing to have. I had an attack once—ten years ago—above a grocer's shop in Rottingdean ; no more than ten years ago, or less, the year our great Edward the Peace Maker died. He died when I was in the thick of it."

That means that Katherine was in the thick of it

above the grocer's shop in May, 1910. But before that she had been in a nursing home, where she had undergone an operation of which the after-pains haunted her memory for years. She recovered. Her power of recuperation in her early twenties was remarkable ; and she came to have such faith in them that she took risks with her health which her Grandmother would have gently but firmly forbidden.

In the early autumn, Mr. Alfred Bishop, the painter, with whom she had become acquainted through Mr. Orage, lent her his studio-flat in Chelsea, at 131 Cheyne Walk, while he went abroad. There she spent the autumn and winter, and turned to writing poetry once more. This was the time of the famous first exhibition of the Post-Impressionist painters in England, at the Grafton Galleries. Two pictures at least she remembered for many years, though she mistook the gallery where she saw them. Both are now familiar.

“ Wasn't that Van Gogh shown at the Goupil ten years ago ? (she wrote to Dorothy Brett in January, 1921). Yellow flowers, brimming with sun, in a pot ? I wonder if it is the same. The picture seemed to reveal something that I hadn't realised before I saw it. It lived with me afterwards. It still does. That, and another of a sea-captain in a flat cap. They taught me something about writing, which was queer, a kind of freedom—or rather, a shaking free. When one has been working for a long stretch one begins to narrow one's vision a bit, to give things down too much. And it's only when something else breaks through, a picture or something seen out of doors, that one realises it.”

It seems that Katherine was remembering the actual effect upon her of the Van Gogh paintings in the winter of 1910-11. Evidently, she was working hard. And there is evidence that she was experimenting. For one story of hers which can be definitely assigned to this winter is *A Fairy Story* which appeared in *The Open Window* for October-March, 1910-11. That story, which is markedly different from her other published work of this time, is further distinguished by the fact that she changed the form of her name. It was printed as Katherina Mansfield ; and evidently not by accident, for it appeared no less than eight times at the head of the pages. There is not much doubt that she was trying to "shake free" of the personality she had created for herself in her work in *The New Age*, and the change of name was meant to be symbolic of her emancipation. To this period probably also belong the poems which she afterwards published in *Rhythm* as "translations from the Russian of Boris Petrovsky." Like the *Fairy Story*, they are delicate lyrical evocations, the expression of an element of her nature which evaded the satirical.

It was during this time that Madame Alexander, who lived in the flat above, heard Katherine singing, and was so impressed by the quality of her voice that she endeavoured to persuade her to have it properly trained. In vain. Katherine felt that it would take too much from her writing, in which she was now absorbed. But the quality of her voice was, indeed, remarkable. It was singularly pure and silvery, yet very flexible ; and she could use it when she chose with extraordinary dramatic skill. She had an

SEA-CHANGE

intimate repertoire of the oddest songs : " The Magistrite looked angry, and the pris'ner 'ung 'is 'ead," " Ah'm a Jonah, ah'm an unlucky man," " Sister Mary, she keeps the golden gites," " I worked all day for forty cents pay," " Where have you been all the day, Randall my son ? " which was heart-rending as she sang it. But most of all in the voice she used for her favourite songs, one remembers a far-away, other-worldly quality, akin to that which finds expression in her poetry as distinct from her prose. And sometimes she sang the lovely poem of her own—" The Sea-Child"—which has not yet taken hold of the general memory as one day it will. For in it is expressed, in a tiny compass, that sense of being a stranger in a strange land among men and women which always lay deep in Katherine Mansfield's heart. That quality was in her voice when she sang.

In the early spring of 1911 Katherine took a flat at 69 Clovelly Mansions, Gray's Inn Road ; and with it she took a charwoman called Mrs. Bates. Six years afterwards, when Katherine was living in a studio in Church Street, Chelsea, Mrs. Bates returned to her as charwoman, though it cost her a long journey every day. For there had grown up between them a bond of strong affection. Mrs. Bates, like " Ma Parker," of whom she was certainly the original, had " had a hard life." She was a little woman, with a stoop, a grey face, and a faded bonnet ; she spoke but little, did her work quickly and unobtrusively, and adored Katherine. What Katherine felt towards her is in the story which she imagined for her.

That summer the Beauchamp family came to London ; and Katherine and her brother, " Chummie," who stayed behind in London after the family had left, became closer friends than before. But in the early autumn she fell ill again, this time with pleurisy, and went to Geneva, where one of her Polish friends—the father of the *wunderkind*—was now settled. To this moment, or the memory of this moment, belong the *Tales from a Courtyard* printed in *Rhythm* ; and there is a humorous description of the boarding-house at which she stayed in " Pension Séguin." The change of note in such a piece from that of the outwardly similar sketches of *In a German Pension* is marked. Katherine was now laughing at herself. The conclusion to the sketch called *Violet*, which is set in Geneva, is characteristic. Violet is naïve, but so is Katherine in being astonished at her naïveté : human beings are all rather absurd and rather lovable. Plainly, she was growing out of the satirical conventions, and eager to turn from the somewhat narrow path which *The New Age* had prescribed for her. But this path had at least led to the publication of her first book. In the autumn of 1911 the German Pension sketches were collected and published in a volume by Stephen Swift, who paid her £15 in advance of royalties.

From the *Morning Post*, in particular, it received some discriminating praise ; and it had some measure of success. At the moment when her publisher went bankrupt it was in its third edition. Since the editions were of 500 copies, that means that at least a thousand copies had been sold.

That autumn Katherine received through her publishers, Stephen Swift, a letter from John Middleton Murry. It asked her to send a story to *Rhythm*, a small quarterly literary magazine of some few months' standing published at Oxford. She replied by sending a rather bitter "fairy story." Murry returned it, saying that he had not found it easy to understand, and asking for another. She sent *The Woman at the Store*. He was deeply impressed by this grim and convincing story of a woman's life in the back-blocks of New Zealand, and wrote to her expressing his admiration. And, shortly afterwards, at the end of December, he was invited by the late W. L. George and his wife to meet Katherine Mansfield at dinner at 84 Hamilton Terrace. He accepted eagerly.

Katherine arrived a little late, in a taxi. She wore a simple dove-grey evening dress with a single red flower, and a gauze scarf of the same dove-grey. She was at first very quiet and reserved. Murry even felt that his congratulations on *The Woman at the Store*—which he said, very truly, was "by far the best story that had been sent in to *Rhythm*"—had been profuse and clumsy. And in other ways he felt rather crude. He had never tasted plum-soup, which—as a German gourmet's dish—was served in honour of Katherine's recently published book. He had not read Artzibashev's *Sanine*, nor even heard of the author's name; and the book was a topic of discussion. None the less, after a little while, the ice melted, and Katherine and he were absorbed in talk—so absorbed that by the time they went to look for a taxi for her, he was in imminent

danger of having to walk to Waterloo. At parting, she asked him to come to tea at her flat. It is characteristic that it never occurred to him to ask her to take tea with him.

It was not until he was in full tilt after his train that it struck him that he did not know where she lived, and that no day had been appointed. Nor did he realise that he was suffering from love at first sight. Instead, he waited impatiently and in vain for a note of more explicit invitation. It did not come.

It was some weeks afterwards he received a letter from Geneva, in which Katherine explained that she had suddenly had to return there ; but that she would be in London again very soon, and would give him honey and brown bread for tea, if he came. He went, from Oxford. It was a rainy day. He was naïvely surprised to find her in a room with rush matting on the floor, but with hardly any furniture. Conspicuously, there was no table. There was a roll-top desk with a chair, a simple divan, and a small rocking-chair, in which he was invited to sit. The tea was served in bowls upon the floor.

For a little while he felt awkward, perched uncertainly above her, while she squatted on the floor and poured the tea. But again the ice melted magically ; and he found himself telling her, not merely of his ambitions with regard to the little magazine, but of his immediate problem. It was that he felt that Oxford had become unendurable, that he could not face the prospect of returning there merely to sit for a School in which he had long since

lost all interest. Yet what could he do? He was maintained at Oxford solely by scholarships and exhibitions; and both his school and college had been very generous towards him. It was his duty, he knew, to work at least moderately well and get the First that was expected of him. But a year before he had conceived the idea of going to Paris for his vacations; and under the influence of Paris all capacity for working for examinations had seeped away from him. Oxford, his Oxford friends, his Oxford work, had become suddenly unreal. He had made up his mind to leave. Yet, if he did leave, there was nothing for him to do. He could not quarter himself at home with a father whose natural ambition he had disappointed completely. He must launch out and make some sort of living. And, so far as he knew, there was no sort of living to be made.

Katherine was gravely sympathetic; and together they stared for a long while at the manifest impossibility. Then they laughed. Life was like that. "But," she said, "don't stay at Oxford, whatever you do. It's wrong." And somehow that seemed to lift a weight from his shoulders—to be, in some inexplicable way, a solution of the problem which it left precisely the same as it was before. Yet not precisely the same. For the decision now was taken. It was no longer a question of whether, but of how.

He had a brilliant friend, he said, three years older than himself, who had disappointed everybody at Oxford. He was making a living of some sort by reporting cricket-matches for *The Field*. Perhaps he might help. And he was very anxious to meet

Katherine, whose sketches in *The New Age* he had read and admired from the beginning. How would it be if the three of them had dinner together next week, and talked it all over? They could dine at the *Dieppe* for 1s. 3d.

Katherine agreed. "But," she said, "you shall call for me at tea-time, and we'll go and have tea somewhere first. I may have thought of something. Then we'll meet Goodyear." And that seemed to him a curiously perfect idea. So they parted. She came into the dark hall to see him out. Her peach-coloured silk shawl, like a big embroidered handkerchief, glowed while they said good-bye. When he had reached the bottom of the long stairs he crossed the road and looked up to mark her rooms in memory. It was hard to distinguish them. The floors, the windows were all the same. He calculated by the staircase—four flights and then to the left. There, or thereabouts. Was that a peach-coloured shawl he could see dimly at the window? He took the risk, and waved, and ran.

Immediately he set to work with a new energy. He explained his situation to his old classical tutor, H. F. Fox, who had stood by him so often in the past, and now stood by him once again. Fox made no secret of his disapproval. "I don't think I ought to help you," he said. Then, severely and fiercely, "But we'll go and see Spender to-morrow." And on the next day it was so. Two humaner men—two men more liberal in the ideal sense of that new hackneyed word—were not, than these two friends. And, when they joined forces against him, it was hard indeed for Murry to stand his ground.

"After all," said Spender, "a First is worth having."
 "And why not take a year in Germany?" said Fox. "There are new research fellowships: the College will give you one gladly, I know." "Besides," said Spender, "it's only a matter of three months more work."

"But I ceased to work a year ago. I don't work. I simply read Plato over and over. I don't *work* even on him. I can't see him from the school's point of view any more. I don't know why, but I can't."

And if he had been aware of what had happened to him, he would have said: "And I've fallen hopelessly, finally in love." But he was not aware of anything save that it had become still more impossible than before to go on with Oxford.

Somehow, he convinced them that it was so. "Well, well, it can't be helped, I see," said Spender. "But remember, there's no future in this profession. Since Northcliffe came, we journalists are doomed. But I'll give you what work I can. You must begin by writing paragraphs." He opened the fresh copy of the *Westminster* on his desk and pointed to them.

"We pay 7s. 6d. each for those. One a day is £2 5s. a week; two a day is £4 10s. Get them in every morning by the first post. I'll take what I can."

Murry stammered his thanks, and prepared to leave. Evidently Fox and Spender had something more important to talk about. "Just a moment," said Spender, and sat down at his desk. He wrote a cheque for £5. "That's in advance," he said.

"It will be taken from your first earnings." It never was.

Murry moved to London the next day, intending to stay at home for a week or two until he could find and furnish a room.

On the stroke of his appointment he knocked at the door of Katherine's flat ; on the stroke of his knock she opened the door. She was ready : dressed in a tailored coat and skirt of dark blue serge, with a small cream-coloured straw hat trimmed with a tiny bunch of gay flowers, with grey gloves—there was something almost boyish about her. Perhaps it came from the little tailored coat which hung straight from the shoulders. But no : it was deeper, more essential than that. She was not, somehow, primarily a woman. He was not conscious of her as a woman. She was a perfectly simple, perfectly exquisite human being, whose naturalness made him natural. With her there was no need to pretend.

"I've got a job," he said.

Her brown eyes sparkled. "Not really?" she said incredulously. He nodded. It was hard to prevent his face from beaming with a stupid smile. "Really and truly. . . . Let me show you."

She led the way into her writing-room. He took Spender's cheque out of his pocket-book and laid it before her. "That's in advance—for work," he said.

She seemed to be quite as blissfully astonished by it as himself. She clasped her hands together and said, "I *am* glad." And he knew she meant it. He began to explain how it had happened. "No.

don't tell me now," she said. "Let's go and have tea."

As she was closing the door she paused, as though remembering something. "You haven't *seen* my flat," she said, and led the way in. "You haven't seen the kitchen." It had a gas-stove, a table and two chairs, and a big window, which she opened. "That is my *view*," she said. It looked out over a vast forest of chimney-pots, with here and there in the distance a tall grey church spire, almost silvery in the sunlight. No street could be seen. The noise of the London traffic sank to a low hum—no more, it seemed, than the natural murmur of the forest ; making the quiet intense.

"Do you like my view ? " she asked.

"It's very beautiful."

She showed him her second sitting-room. Like the first, its walls were covered with plain brown paper and the floor was matting. There was a grand piano and a divan. The fireplace was filled with lavender, and on the floor was a big pawa shell, and a flat oval bowl of water with a green-bronze lizard within.

She showed him her bathroom and her little bedroom—almost a cubicle—with room for a camp-bed and chair ; and then she had shown him everything.

"Do you like the place I live in ? "

"Very much," he said.

"It's a good place for work, and it's not dear. £52 a year. It's better, don't you think, to spend the money on the rooms and go short on the other things ? Better be hungry than sordid."

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

They went to the ground floor of the Isola Bella, and sat with their backs to the street window. There was no one there except themselves, and the proprietress who served them. Then Murry told his story. She listened. Half-way through, "I like your Fox," she said. At the end: "Let me look at that cheque again." He produced it. She studied it.

"I don't think I've ever liked the look of a cheque so much."

"Do you know," said Murry. "I think you are in some way responsible for this?"

"Me?"

"Yes. You see, I think you clinched it in my mind. If it hadn't been for that talk of ours—if it hadn't been for your telling me not to go back—I might never have tackled Fox."

She seemed to ponder this. Her beautiful hand, cupped like a shell, moved slowly on the table. "I wonder . . . I would like to think so," she said.

Then he broached his plan. It was that they should edit *Rhythm* together. As far as he then knew—his knowledge was very superficial—the magazine was paying its way. He would send her all the manuscripts submitted; and once a week they would meet and compare notes. She would write a story every month. But perhaps the more excellent part of the plan, in his eyes, was the weekly meeting.

She seemed delighted by the idea. "I'm not getting on very well with *The New Age*," she confessed. "They have a conviction that I can only

SEA-CHANGE

write satire. And I'm not a very satirical person—really.”

It was amazing to him, at that moment, that anyone should have supposed she was a satirical person at all.

“I believe in something,” she went on. “Let’s call it truth. It’s a very big thing. It’s inside us and outside us. We have to discover it. That’s what the artist is for—to become true by discovering truth. Or perhaps it’s the other way about. Truth is so important that when you discover a tiny bit of it, that you forget all about everything else—and all about yourself.”

“Perhaps,” said Murry, “that is what Keats meant when he said that ‘Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty.’”

“I would like to know . . . The only reason for satire—and I think it’s a real reason—is that it attacks those who deny the truth. It’s defending truth ; but *it* isn’t truth. But one can’t attack the false without knowing—or feeling—the true. It would be horrible if we did—somehow, corrupt.”

They went to meet Goodyear. To him the story had to be told once again. He, too, seemed pleased.

“Whatever you do, don’t live at home. Living at home has been the ruin of me,” he added ruefully. Then he laughed. “I have a parent,” he explained to Katherine, “who will not kick me out. Why, he’s *glad* when I drift back home again, and sponge on him. And so of course, I do. The duty of a parent is to kick his offspring out, and if he fails, then the duty of the offspring is to kick himself out. That’s the law of life—which whoso offendeth,

it were better for him to wear a sky-blue suit and be an advertising agent—as I am about to be.”

They were incredulous.

“It’s true. I am already. I have in my care the advertising of the Stepney Furnishing Company. You two are artists ; you are effete. You do not know, and you will not believe, that I am the man of the future. In me the great twin streams of the *Zeitgeist* converge—advertising and hire purchase. The man who is the advertising agent for a hire-purchase company is the New Machiavelli. Wells has missed the ’bus this time. *Ecce homo !*”

Katherine enjoyed Frederick Goodyear. He belonged to a tribe she knew. He was a born Pa Man. After this evening they became great friends.

The three stood on the pavement of the fountain in Piccadilly Circus. It was a lovely spring night. Nobody wanted to go home. They were happy together.

So they walked round and round.

“I’m going to begin hunting for a room to-morrow—not more than ten shillings a week,” said Murry.

Goodyear approved. Then silence fell again. It was easy to be silent in that evening and that happiness.

“I have a suggestion to make,” said Katherine airily. “Why not have a room in my flat. There’s the music-room. I hardly ever use it, and I certainly don’t need it. We could move the piano. You can have the use of the kitchen and the bath-room. And I won’t charge you ten shillings, because I shall have two rooms and you only one. Would seven and six be too much ? I think it will

suit you better than anything you will find for ten shillings."

He hardly believed that she was serious. But Goodyear took it coolly. "That's a very good idea," he said.

There was another silence. They walked round once again. Then they had to say Good night.

Murry said to Katherine: "Are you really serious—about the rooms?"

"Of course. Why not?"

"Then I should like it very much."

"Go—ood!" she said, in a small, cool, flute-like voice. Then: "When will you come?"

"When you like."

"Well, let's say Monday—Monday tea-time. I'll have everything ready by then. Do you like eggs?"

She gave him her hand, holding her body back. "*Auf wiedersehen*," she said, and flitted across the Circus. He watched her white hat disappear in the dusk.

On the Monday—it was the middle of April—he arrived with his belongings. Katherine was dressed, as before, and ready to go out. But she showed him his room. A little table had been arranged by the window with a bright blue table-cloth. A cupboard had been emptied to make room for his books and clothes. She gave him two keys.

"I have to go out now. You will find your tea in the kitchen. And you can get your own supper. You'll find everything there. I hope you will be comfortable. Now I'll say good night—Murry!" And she disappeared.

He worked hard, and painfully, at his paragraphs

after tea. He had to scrap fully a dozen before he had produced two which seemed tolerable. Then it was past ten, and he was tired. He went out to post them, and went to bed.

In the morning he was wakened by a knock at the door. "I've finished with the bathroom," said Katherine's voice. "And your breakfast is in the kitchen."

In the kitchen he found the table laid, and a boiling kettle. Brown bread and butter and honey, and a large brown egg in an egg-cup. Fixed between the egg and the egg-cup was, like a big blue label, a half-sheet of notepaper with this inscription :

"This is your egg. You must boil it. K.M."

So Murry became Katherine Mansfield's lodger. For many weeks they went their own ways, meeting only after they had finished their work at night. Then, at midnight, they would have bowls of tea on the floor of Katherine's room and talk till two in the morning. They always shook hands before they went to bed.

"Good night, Mansfield !"

"Good night, Murry !"

Once Katherine had to stay in bed with a sharp attack of her now recurrent pleurisy, and Murry sat in the chair by her bedside and performed her instructions while Ida Baker was away. And once or twice a week they would meet at tea-time and discuss the next issue of *Rhythm*, which had now imprudently become a monthly.

As they grew closer friends they would dine out cheaply together : perhaps too cheaply. But Murry's early paragraphs, in spite of all his toil,



K. M. AND J. M. M.

were rarely acceptable : and he made barely a pound a week. So—until they began to make soup for themselves—they tended to dine, rather painfully, at a meat-pie shop at twopence a time. To take the taste away they went to the saloon bar of the *Duke of York*, in Theobald's Road, where the landlady took a liking for them and always insisted, when they had paid for one drink, on standing them another.

"I know what it is, my dear, to be down on your luck," she would say to Katherine, and nod sagely. "I know." She was convinced that they were a music-hall couple "resting." And when they tried to convince her to the contrary, she was rather hurt, because she felt that they were trying to conceal the truth, even from her. Since they liked her they let her have her way. They admitted reluctantly that they *were* a music-hall turn without engagements ; and she was radiant.

"I *knew* I'd seen yer both on the 'alls," she said. And, looking back, it seems that her idea was reasonable enough. Katherine usually wore a close-fitting velvet bodice and skirt, and a bright shawl : Murry wore a big navy-blue fisherman's jersey. Such clothes were unfamiliar in Clerkenwell.

The saloon bar of *The Duke of York* was the scene of a strange happening which was crucial in the relation of Katherine and Murry. He had received for review from *The Westminster* one of Dr. Wallis Budge's translations of the sacred books of Egypt. Since he knew nothing of ancient Egypt he was reading it with great care. In it the phrase occurred repeatedly : *The Boat of the Million Years*. Suddenly

THE LIFE OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

the phrase became real to his imagination, and a shadowy boat was laden with the horror of the timeless world. The shock, perhaps by contrast with his present happiness, was overwhelming, and he burst into tears.

In a little while he pulled himself together ; but the cold about his heart remained. Perhaps half an hour afterwards Katherine came in.

She noticed instantly that something was wrong. "What *is* the matter ? " she asked anxiously.

"Nothing . . . it's nothing."

"Oh no, it isn't nothing. I can *see* that something has happened."

So he tried to explain the desolation which had suddenly descended upon him : how a sense of the futility and insignificance of all that was human in respect of the infinite process of the years had seized him with an almost physical grasp. It was as though some inward part of him which had been warm and living had been frozen. She listened and understood. Then she said :

"Murry, I *love* you. Doesn't that make any difference ? "

It was the first time the word had been spoken between them, and it did make a difference.

But as before they lived their separate lives for several days. They kissed each other good night instead of shaking hands. And strangely, Murry was haunted by ghostly traces of the same cold fear. An icy wind would blow upon him suddenly, passing as quickly as it came.

One night they were in *The Duke of York* together. The saloon bar was fairly full, and the gramophone

was playing. Most of the habitués were there—faded and kindly solicitors' clerks most of them, not improved by the admixture of a repulsive fat man with an insatiable appetite for telling obscene stories—a shopkeeping couple or two, drinking stout sedately at the round tables—and Lil. Lil was almost always there. They took it for granted that she was a prostitute, though they never saw her leave with a man. There was something terribly impressive about Lil. One would never have dreamed of saying that one liked her: she was altogether too remote. No matter how inclusive the gaiety in the saloon bar might be, she was never involved in it. Yet she was Lil to everybody. The name was not meant, or felt to be, a familiarity. Everybody said "Good evening, Lil" when they entered; hardly anybody said anything more to her during the evening. It was a convention of the place to ignore her—out of a kind of deference, as though she were there *incognito*. Yet if by chance she was absent, the first question asked of Ma, the landlady, was always: "Where's Lil?" And a great part of the evening's conversation would be spent in wondering what might have happened to her. Was she ill?

It is hard to say what happened on this particular night. And perhaps nothing particular did happen save to Katherine and Murry—and Lil. Suddenly they were conscious that she was looking at herself intently in the big mirror. Probably she had looked at herself many times before, and probably they had seen her do it often. But to-night it was different. She was looking at herself as at a stranger,

in whose face she was trying to discover something. And the stranger's face in the mirror was terribly white and old ; and the eyes in the face were fathomless dark caverns, reaching back, back. It seemed as though Lil could not take her own eyes away from those eyes in the mirror. They had laid some spell upon her. And well they might.

Murry did not know that Katherine was watching Lil ; neither did Katherine know that Murry was watching her. When they spoke of it afterwards, they discovered that each had wanted the other *not* to see. Each had felt that the other should be spared that sight. When Murry had risen to go—long before the usual time—Katherine had followed eagerly, thankful that Murry had escaped the vision.

Neither had escaped it. All their lives long this remained the most vivid of their experiences together. Yet it is doubtful whether either of them spoke of it again, after that night. Even on that night they said very little about it, though it occupied all their thoughts, as they sat on the floor together by the fire. Lil's face in the mirror brought them finally together. Against that vision—and all its inexpressible meaning—they knew they must hold together, for *ever*. It had been part of the understanding between them, since they had acknowledged that they did love one another, that it might not be permanent. That night as they clasped each other close, and sat silent before the fire, they knew and acknowledged that they were bound together for ever. That night, for the first time, they slept in each other's arms.

SEA-CHANGE

The rest of Katherine Mansfield's life—a bare eleven years—is written by her own hand in her *Journal* and her *Letters*. In the nature of things that record is not complete. Many of her letters have been published only in part, and some not published at all. And probably it will be many years yet before these can be published. But the publication, when it comes, will add little that is essential to the picture of herself that is contained in the *Journal* and the *Letters*. What she was, what she became, is told in them with far greater truth than any biographer could hope to achieve.